

CHANGING OF THE GUARD:  
NATION BUILDING AND THE UNITED STATES MILITARY

BY  
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## APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis meets masters-level standards of research, argumentation, and expression.

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## DISCLAIMER

The conclusions and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author. They do not reflect the official position of the US Government, Department of Defense, the United States Air Force, or Air University.

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the United States military's move away from the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine. It assesses the evolution of America's use-of-force doctrine by evaluating changes in post-Cold War national strategy documents and their context within the historical narrative. It further illuminates the relationship between the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the president as a lens through which to evaluate the changing nature of America's civil-military relations. The analysis examines three time capsules: the end of the Cold War and Desert Storm, hegemony before 9/11, and hegemony after 9/11. The results of this analysis suggest the president's ill-defined role as commander-in-chief and America's emergence as a global hegemon allowed the increased application of military force in the conduct of foreign policy. Despite the intent of the Goldwater-Nichols legislation to enhance military advice to the president by strengthening the chairman's position, the evidence suggests the chairman's role in determining when and how to use force has declined significantly since a peak under the leadership of Colin Powell. The final section of the study highlights inputs into the trend toward a military co-opted by a strong executive and addresses ways the institution can ensure its future leaders retain the capacity for independent thought grounded in the history of warfare.

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## Introduction

*Officers take on immense responsibilities...unlike anything in civilian life, for they have in their control the means of death and destruction.*

-Michael Walzer  
*Just and Unjust Wars*

Shortly after declaring a Global War on Terror in 2001, the United States invaded Afghanistan in response to the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. In 2003, the United States also invaded Iraq after suggesting the regime there had ties to Al Qaeda and possessed weapons of mass destruction with intent to use them against the United States. In both cases, conventional fighting ended shortly after hostilities began. Both the Taliban and Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath party were effectively removed from power. Yet nearly a decade into the Global War on Terror, the United States military continues to battle insurgencies in both countries while pursuing a stable transition to effective governance by elected officials. Following the Iraq model, the current strategy in Afghanistan puts popularity at a premium by emphasizing the importance of winning over the civilian population. In both cases, the will of the indigenous population threatens the potential fruits of America's sacrifice in life, limb and treasure.

War theorists throughout history have warned against the dangers America confronts in the Middle East. Through the writings of Sun Tzu, ancient history reveals mankind's awareness of the perils of protracted military struggles.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Nicias described his belief that nations attempting to introduce a new government in a foreign land by means of force "should be prepared to become master of the country...or failing in this to find everything hostile to [them]."<sup>2</sup> His warning failed to deter Athens from over-extending itself during 27 years of conflict in the Peloponnesian War.

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<sup>1</sup> Despite inconclusive evidence regarding authorship, most scholars believe the writings on war attributed to Sun Tzu appeared somewhere near 400 BC. "There has never been a protracted war from which a country has benefitted." Sun Tzu, *The Illustrated Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2005), 107.

<sup>2</sup> Thucydides, *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, ed. Robert B. Strasser (New York, NY: Free Press, 1996), 375.

Writing his treatise on war theory in the nineteenth century, Antoine-Henri Jomini lamented the potential disaster of fighting a people in arms.<sup>3</sup> Despite his advice numerous states have chosen to involve themselves in counterinsurgency wars outside their sovereign territory. From Napoleon's struggles in Spain to the Soviet Union's disastrous operations in Afghanistan, powerful nations continue to disregard the counsel of their predecessors. The temptation to engage in counterinsurgency warfare against a perceived weaker nation remains a challenge for modern great power states. After declaring a Global War on Terror, the United States could not resist the allure of an easy victory despite history's unmistakable cautionary tale and the timeless advice of war theorists throughout the centuries.

Given the history of great states choosing protracted wars despite their awareness of the potential for disaster, frustration's explanation points the inquisitor toward a basic flaw in the character of the human condition. Yet reams of historical accounts intimately describe the decisions made leading to the American invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. America's founders intentionally formed a government designed to prevent one person from making decisions that lead the nation on a path of destruction. Decisions to fight are instead the product of the advice and counsel of numerous popularly elected officials and men and women with decades of experience in national defense. Furthermore, the bitter residue of failure in Vietnam, experienced less than thirty years before, still lined the nostrils of United States leaders as they inhaled the breath required to order American youth into harm's way in the Middle East.

## **Methodology**

Although numerous accounts of America's recent activities in Iraq and Afghanistan focus on the role of the president and his administration, the purpose of this thesis is to highlight the political influence of the military over the past twenty years as extolled by its senior officer--the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Starting with Colin Powell, and tracing the philosophies of each chairman since, considering their

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<sup>3</sup> Jomini suggests the consequences of national uprisings "are so terrible that, for the sake of humanity, we ought to hope never to see it." He further highlights the perils of fighting two wars at once. Baron De Jomini, *The Art of War*, trans. Capt. G.H. Mendell and Lieut. W.P. Craighill (Radford, VA: Wilder Publications, LLC., 2008), 20, 25.

relevant statements facilitates an analysis of the degree of military control over recent American leaders' tendency to engage in nation-building operations (for pictorial representation of chairmen, presidents, military operations, and strategy documents, see appendix). As Yuen Foong Khong revealed in *Analogies at War*, policy makers' statements provide significant insight into the rationale behind their decision making.<sup>4</sup> Specifically, comparing developments in the national strategy documents against statements made by the chairmen reveals a pattern of thought regarding the military's role in nation building that forms the basis for the conclusions of this research. Multiple sources revealing consistent thoughts strengthen the evidence and an examination of situational context and civilian leadership philosophies adds perspective.

## Structure

The first chapter examines two primary topics central to this research: American civil-military relations and the United States military's role in nation building. This chapter describes the relationship between the nation's civilian and military leaders, highlighting major historical events responsible for its evolution prior to the end of the Cold War. Additionally, using policy statements and historical evidence, this chapter compares the military's role in nation building prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union with its role today.

Chapter two examines Colin Powell's influence on his civilian leadership regarding the role of the United States military in nation building. Reaching as far back as Vietnam to illustrate the source of his views, the bulk of the second chapter will capture both his philosophy on the use of force and his ability to influence two different presidential administrations. Highlights of this chapter include the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine and a description of decision-making and use of force in Desert Storm.

The third chapter examines the interaction of John Shalikashvili and Hugh Shelton with the Clinton Administration. Using American military operations in

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<sup>4</sup> Khong concludes that recurrently stated analogies, whether voiced in public or in private, offer insight into the reasons behind policy-makers' decisions. For the purposes of this research, the broader point that repeated sentiments reveal the way policy-makers view a situation facilitates piecing together their views on past events using documented statements. Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogy at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 16, 58-64, 102-05.

Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo, this section highlights changes in the role of the chairman and his ability to influence defense policy after the departure of Colin Powell by underscoring the evolving role of the United States military in nation building.

Highlights of this chapter include the change of administrations, the internal friction within the joint force and the evolving domestic and international political environment.

Chapter four assesses changes in civil-military relations after the watershed terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. Beginning with the declaration of a Global War on Terror and continuing through contemporary operations, this section further elucidates the link between the military's role in nation building and American civil-military relations by assessing the influence of Richard Meyers, Peter Pace and Michael Mullen.

The fifth and final chapter coalesces the evidence from the three preceding case study time periods to suggest conclusions regarding the relationship between the United States military's nation-building role and the current state of civil-military relations. Further, analyzing the effect of this relationship on joint doctrine and the national defense establishment produces recommendations for future national defense policy and the development of senior military leaders.

# **Chapter 1**

## **Civil-Military Relations and Nation Building in the United States**

*What is highly dangerous is to let any soldier but the commander-in-chief exert an influence in cabinet.*

-Carl von Clausewitz  
*On War*

Since that fateful day in 2001 when terrorists hijacked airliners and used them as weapons to murder thousands of unsuspecting men, women, and children, America's leaders have struggled to find an effective solution for national security aligned with the ideals of limited government and civilian authority. Reminiscent of Pearl Harbor in 1941, the stench of a massive attack on American territory without a formal declaration of war seemed to require vengeful retaliation to both satisfy the rage of the American people and prevent a subsequent occurrence. Only weeks after the attack, United States leaders maintained the notion of a Global War on Terror with goals of eradicating terrorism and exporting democracy as a hedge against future attacks.<sup>1</sup> Recent comments describing America's military activities in Afghanistan and Iraq have softened their characterization by labeling them Overseas Contingency Operations.<sup>2</sup> Far from insignificant, the change in rhetoric reflects a deeper struggle for the control of those whose presence and actions uniquely represent their country—the United States military.

### **American Civil-Military Relations**

The distinctive system that provides civilian control of the military in the United States developed from tenuous circumstances at the conclusion of the American war for independence. As noted by Don Higginbotham, “civil-military relations [during the Revolutionary War] were far from tranquil and harmonious; in fact they were probably more strained at certain periods during the Revolution than at any other time in our

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<sup>1</sup> George W. Bush (address, White House Oval Office, Washington, DC, 20 September 2001).

<sup>2</sup> Scott Wilson and Al Kamen, “‘Global War on Terror’ is Given New Name: Bush Phrase is Out, Pentagon Says,” *The Washington Post*, 25 March 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/24/AR2009032402818.html> (accessed 16 February 2010).

history.”<sup>3</sup> Despite the tension, Richard Kohn describes the philosophy of the commander of the Continental Army by stating, George “Washington should be remembered and appreciated for his absolute, unconditional, and steadfast refusal ever to seek or seize power outside legitimate political or constitutional channels. From the very beginning of his command, respect for civil authority was his first principle.”<sup>4</sup> Even in the face of a frustrated, ill-supplied officer corps after the war, Washington used the admiration and popularity he had gained during the conflict to convince the disgruntled men that revolting against their civilian masters would “lessen the dignity, and sully the glory you have hitherto maintained.”<sup>5</sup> The foundation Washington laid in 1783 proved a solid footing for future tests of civil-military relations in the American Civil War, two world wars, and proxy wars fought during the Cold War. Indeed, civilian control of the military defines a critical aspect of the American system of government.

### The Normal Theory

Beyond the constitutional provision that civilians control the military in the United States, the nature of the relationship evolves over time. Samuel Huntington suggests the Framers of the United States Constitution intentionally left the duties of the commander in chief ambiguous for the purpose of political expediency.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, the separation of powers intended to prevent over-centralization in any one branch of government further precludes a definitive explanation of the intended nature of civil-military relations.<sup>7</sup>

Although early American presidents were considered equally capable in both political and military affairs, Huntington describes a decoupling of political and military leadership after the American Civil War due to the professionalization of the officer

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<sup>3</sup> Don Higginbotham, *George Washington and the American Military Tradition* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 80.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Higginbotham, *George Washington*, 115.

<sup>5</sup> In Newburgh, NY on March 15, 1783, Washington addressed a gathering of army officers after an anonymous letter from an officer threatened that the army would not disband at the end of the war if its financial demands were not met or that it would refuse to fight if the war continued. Gen George Washington, (address, Continental Army officer meeting, Newburgh, NY, 15 March 1783).

<sup>6</sup> “The American constitutional system thus does not facilitate the stable existence of a balanced pattern of executive civil-military relations.” Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985), 178, 189.

<sup>7</sup> Huntington describes how military professionals have been politicized by the competition for control between the legislative and executive branches of government. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 184.

corps.<sup>8</sup> The lack of a constitutional provision for this development continues to yield latitude in defining the exact duties of the president as commander in chief.<sup>9</sup> Huntington further suggests that the professional military developed a unique outlook, incongruent with that of business leaders and civilian officials, which solidified between the Civil War and World War I and remains today.<sup>10</sup>

Developing at the end of the Nineteenth Century, the professional officer corps desired to serve as military experts who conducted war as they believed Carl von Clausewitz intended.<sup>11</sup> These officers “unanimously agreed that strategy was ‘the servant of statesmanship’ and that the determination of national goals had to precede the decisions on strategy.”<sup>12</sup> Through the 1930s, they regarded policy and strategy as things apart, with strategy beginning where policy ends. Professional officers chafed against politicians’ interference in military affairs. Military leaders sought to independently determine an appropriate military strategy to achieve the policy ends of their civilian masters.<sup>13</sup> In the 1920s and 1930s, professional military independence was further reinforced by a feeling of moral superiority over society’s increasingly relaxed moral values and hedonistic lifestyle defined by materialism and loose living.<sup>14</sup>

Following this initial chapter in the development of a professional military, the dramatic alteration of the national security environment and the increase in America’s relative power during and after World War II significantly changed the nature of civil-military relations in the United States. Blaming the change more on a civilian abdication of responsibility than on a military grab for power, Huntington suggests military leaders who threw off the shackles of their apolitical military outlook and instead embraced national politics not only ran the war, but also gained a larger voice in all aspects of domestic governance. Beyond direct access to the president in matters of war strategy, military leaders virtually dictated their own budget to congress.<sup>15</sup> Military influence in

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<sup>8</sup> Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 185-86.

<sup>9</sup> Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 186.

<sup>10</sup> Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 254.

<sup>11</sup> Clausewitz described war as “a continuation of political intercourse, with the addition of other means.” Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 605.

<sup>12</sup> Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 262.

<sup>13</sup> Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 308.

<sup>14</sup> Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 310.

<sup>15</sup> Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 315-29.

government policy became so pervasive during World War II, the only way the military budget could be reduced in the post-war years was that President Eisenhower, no less than an American hero during the war, personally assured Congress that reductions did not jeopardize American security.<sup>16</sup>

Huntington believes the relationship initially formed during the emergence of the professional officer corps, characterized by apolitical military service under civilian policy makers, better serves America's needs.<sup>17</sup> Believing in the benefit of a clear delineation between politics and military professionalism, he suggests that more competent civilian leadership, and therefore military leaders allowed to maintain an independent military viewpoint untainted by politics, would have yielded less civil-military harmony and better strategy in World War II.<sup>18</sup> However, he also believes a continually high requirement for security makes the nation more conservative and increases the likelihood that military leaders will have political power thrust upon them.<sup>19</sup> If Huntington's theory reflects reality, the insecurity produced by the Cold War threat of a nuclear exchange and contemporary insecurity caused by the fear of terrorism provide fertile ground for an overly influential military presence in American political affairs.

### An Unequal Dialogue

Years after Huntington completed his analysis, Eliot Cohen's examination of military leadership during war highlighted the relationship between great statesmen and the military's they led. Beginning with Abraham Lincoln and including an analysis of political leadership following the September 2001 terrorist attacks, Cohen concludes the most effective wartime statesmen consistently intervene in military affairs. During the American Civil War, Lincoln controlled his generals, shaped the war, and intended to dictate the peace after its completion.<sup>20</sup> Throughout World War II in England, Winston Churchill "kept a close eye on many matters of military detail...[and] often caught his

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<sup>16</sup> Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 372.

<sup>17</sup> In his concluding chapter, Huntington laments a political officer corps, believing instead that a highly professional military leadership immune to politics would help balance the demands of policy. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 464.

<sup>18</sup> Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 344.

<sup>19</sup> Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 464.

<sup>20</sup> Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesman, and Leadership in Wartime* (New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 2002), 18.

military staff when they had it wrong.”<sup>21</sup> Regardless of their familiarity with military matters before they took office, each of the statesman analyzed by Cohen believed they had to know a great deal about war in order to lead effectively.<sup>22</sup>

Instead of considering politics and military matters as things apart, Cohen believes war is politics.<sup>23</sup> While Huntington argues for a clear separation of military professionals and politicians so that policy makers can set the goals military leaders will achieve, Cohen believes reality dictates otherwise. Labeling Huntington’s concept the normal theory of civil-military relations, Cohen suggests it “fails to take into account the ways in which the conduct of war causes objectives and strategic methods alike to change.”<sup>24</sup> Lending credence to Cohen’s position, America’s current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan provide an example of a conflict where military realities radically changed the objectives and strategy of the war.

Both Huntington and Cohen value dissenting views in strategic decision making during war. To ensure multiple viewpoints, Huntington advocates for an apolitical professional officer corps. Diverging from Huntington’s faith in the generic structure of the system, Cohen lays the responsibility for dissenting advice largely at the feet of the commander in chief. Citing England in World War II as an example, Cohen describes how Churchill picked and tolerated military leaders who disagreed with him.<sup>25</sup> Although the relationship between Georges Clemenceau and Ferdinand Foch in World War I France provides an example of a popular military leader elevating his dissenting opinion to a damaging level, the civilian leader maintains the responsibility to negotiate such tempestuous waters for the benefit of the state.<sup>26</sup>

Instead of insisting on a sterile system that forces people to stay in their respective lanes, Cohen elevates the role of senior military leaders by advocating the less restrictive premise of an unequal dialogue between military professionals and their senior leaders.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Cohen, *Supreme Command*, 118, 121.

<sup>22</sup> Cohen, *Supreme Command*, 214.

<sup>23</sup> Cohen illuminates this point through the eyes of Ferdinand Foch: “War is not a dual object, but a unity; so, for that matter, is peace. They are not divided into military and civil departments. The two aspects are closely and inseparably linked.” Cohen, *Supreme Command*, 85.

<sup>24</sup> Cohen, *Supreme Command*, 31.

<sup>25</sup> Cohen, *Supreme Command*, 120, 128.

<sup>26</sup> Cohen, *Supreme Command*, 85-94.

<sup>27</sup> “Except under uniquely favorable conditions the outcome of civilians taking military advice without question is unlikely to be a good one.” Cohen, *Supreme Command*, 207.

Cohen describes this dialogue as a relationship where “dissenting views are not only tolerated but also welcomed, and where the civilian leader has the final say.”<sup>28</sup> While Cohen clearly illustrates the significant weight this relationship places on the shoulders of American presidents, he also eludes to the importance of the military’s role when he states, Vietnam and Desert Storm “combined to create a version of the ‘normal’ theory of civil-military relations that ended by weakening the principle of civilian control of the military in the United States, deepening mistrust between senior officers and politicians, and even, in some measure, politicizing the officer corps.”<sup>29</sup> In the following chapters, the actions and words of America’s highest ranking military officer will provide insight into the military’s role in developing a nation-building strategy after the Cold War.

### **Nation Building**

In 1795, James Madison stated, “of all the enemies of public liberty, war is perhaps the most to be dreaded, because it comprises and develops the germ of every other. War is the parent of armies. From these proceed debts and taxes. And armies, debts and taxes are the known instruments for bringing the many under the domination of the few...No nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare.”<sup>30</sup> Representing the fears of numerous American founders, Madison’s words underscore Eighteenth Century Americans’ intention to reduce government tyranny. While the Framers believed a standing army was required for national defense, they also desired to prevent it from acquiring a disproportionate influence in the state. The *Posse Comitatus Act* and rapid end strength reductions after conflicts reveal America’s continued distaste for the extensive influence of a bloated military.<sup>31</sup>

America once again sought to reduce the size and influence of the military after its massive mobilization for total war in World War II. While the return to a state of relative peace after the war may have allowed a traditional recession of military power under normal circumstances, the dawn of the Cold War besmirched the effort. Shortly

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<sup>28</sup> Cohen, *Supreme Command*, 10, 209.

<sup>29</sup> Cohen, *Supreme Command*, 199.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Andrew J. Bacevich, *The New American Militarism: How Americans are Seduced by War* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), 7.

<sup>31</sup> Jennifer Elsea, “The Posse Comitatus Act and Related Matters: A Sketch,” *Naval Historical Center*, 6 June 2005, <http://www.history.navy.mil/library/online/posse%20comit.htm> (accessed 15 February 2010).

after the Soviet Union demonstrated its ability to build and detonate atomic weapons, the United States found itself under the constant threat of a nuclear exchange with its arch-rival. The resultant fear produced an abnormally influential defense establishment that evolved into an unwieldy military-industrial complex lamented by Dwight Eisenhower in his presidential farewell address.<sup>32</sup>

Consistent with Huntington's theory that a constant threat to national security increases the likelihood of a powerful military, the fear of nuclear annihilation proved fertile ground for a military agenda. Such a dynamic is not unique in American history. Huntington suggests the recently professionalized officer corps of the 1880s and 1890s substituted "their own views on the essentiality of power which were, however, derived not from the needs of foreign policy, but from the needs of the military profession."<sup>33</sup> Similarly during the Cold War, the professional officer corps found in society's unchecked fear of nuclear annihilation the necessary political impetus for unprecedented influence in the absence of open conflict.

In the 1960s, Americans coupled the fear of a nuclear exchange with their increasing fear of communism spreading across the globe.<sup>34</sup> In a phrase remarkably similar to statements made by more recent leaders about America's operations in the Middle East, Lyndon Johnson described the emerging situation in Vietnam by claiming, "we have a commitment to Vietnamese freedom."<sup>35</sup> After more than a decade of attempting to ensure democratic governance, America's military forces left Vietnam with the lesser objective of simply not sustaining a military defeat before their departure.<sup>36</sup> Not unlike today's situation in Afghanistan, the exit strategy in Vietnam "rested on the ability of South Vietnam to build its own security forces, governance, and economy."<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Campbell Craig, *Destroying the Village: Eisenhower and Thermonuclear War* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1998), 118.

<sup>33</sup> Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 265.

<sup>34</sup> Relying on an analogy to dominoes, the Johnson administration believed preventing the spread of communism in Vietnam would prevent its further spreading to numerous other countries in the region.

<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Bill Moyers, "Bill Moyers's Journal," *Public Broadcasting Service*, 20 November 2009, [http://www.pbs.org/cove-media/http/PBS\\_CP\\_Bill\\_Moyers/252/918/transcript1.html](http://www.pbs.org/cove-media/http/PBS_CP_Bill_Moyers/252/918/transcript1.html) (accessed 18 February 2010).

<sup>36</sup> Stephen R. Randolph, *Powerful and Brutal Weapons* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 13.

<sup>37</sup> Randolph, *Powerful and Brutal Weapons*, 12.

Ultimately, South Vietnamese capabilities did not reach the necessary level of competence to prevent their demise after the departure of United States forces.

America's failure in Vietnam left a lasting impression on military officers who eventually reached positions of senior leadership. Conventional military wisdom blamed the debacle on a failure of civil-military relations that allowed excessive civilian control over military matters.<sup>38</sup> During the war, both Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon exercised the office of the commander-in-chief through constant and unyielding control over military operations without the counsel of their military leaders.<sup>39</sup> Despite his reputation as the more effective strategist of the two men, even Nixon believed military leadership in Vietnam was “a sad chapter in the proud military history of this country.”<sup>40</sup> The chasm between civilian and military leadership that opened during the conflict in Vietnam continued to fester in its aftermath.<sup>41</sup> After highly publicized military failures during the Iran hostage rescue attempt and Operation Urgent Fury, Congress passed sweeping military reform legislation to remedy perennial command, control, and coordination problems.<sup>42</sup> These changes, coupled with military leaders obsessed by the desire to never repeat the mistakes of Vietnam, met the crucible of war in Iraq shortly after the fall of the Iron Curtain.

The unexpected collapse of the Soviet Union allowed the world to breathe a collective sigh of relief after four decades of posturing that threatened to end life on Earth. At the same time as many American leaders were exploring the possibility of a peace dividend, the United States military sought a relevant mission to justify its size and expense. The dramatic reduction in threat level should have resulted in an objective

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<sup>38</sup> Although the problems leading to America's failure in Vietnam were extensive, many airmen believed overly restrictive political constraints precluding the destruction of key targets prolonged the conflict.

<sup>39</sup> Randolph, *Powerful and Brutal Weapons*, 82.

<sup>40</sup> Randolph, *Powerful and Brutal Weapons*, 228.

<sup>41</sup> After highlighting the growing pains of initiatives designed to prevent civilian leaders from sending the military to fight without the support of the American public like they had in Vietnam, a threadbare budget, and the hollow army of the 1970s, Kitfield describes the military as “mired in the aftermath of Vietnam for most of a decade” as they presided over the politically costly and embarrassing Iran hostage rescue failure. James Kitfield, *Prodigal Soldiers: How the Generation of Officers Born of Vietnam Revolutionized the American Style of War* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, Inc., 1995), 151, 198, 199, 216-17, 227.

<sup>42</sup> Kitfield describes the events leading up to passage of the Goldwater-Nichols reforms and the creation of an independently funded Special Operations Command. Kitfield, *Prodigal Soldiers*, 263-97.

analysis to define an appropriate end strength and level of capability.<sup>43</sup> Instead, buoyed by an overwhelming victory in Desert Storm, the military sought opportunities to maintain their influential seat at the table of political power. Haunted by the ghosts of Vietnam, many senior military leaders detested the intervention of policy makers in military affairs.<sup>44</sup> Despite their resentment, Cohen suggests “the outcome of civilians taking military advice without question is unlikely to be a good one.”<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, senior military leaders rallied around the doctrine announced in a speech by the Secretary of Defense in 1984.<sup>46</sup> The Weinberger Doctrine reinforced Huntington’s normal theory of civil-military relations by specifying the details of policy ends to which the professional officer corps is entitled prior to the use of force.

### **The Advent of Post-Cold War Nation Building**

In post-Cold War America, a military searching for a mission found an opening in the foreign policy of the Clinton Administration. As secretary of state, Madeleine Albright questioned, “what’s the point of...[the] military...if we can’t use it?”<sup>47</sup> Distinguishing between the use of force for “the cause of peace and justice” and making war on other nations, Albright favored the use of force as a coercive tool of the state.<sup>48</sup> Although its stated purpose remained national defense, the United States military became

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<sup>43</sup> According to Andrew Bacevich, “by all rights, the end of the Cold War ought to have triggered a thoroughgoing reconsideration of the size and appropriate role of America’s armed forces.” Bacevich, *The New American Militarism*, 53.

<sup>44</sup> With multiple tours in Vietnam as a younger officer, Colin Powell’s ascension to the highest uniformed position in the military was largely defined by the common wisdom that poor government policy and decision making had tarnished the reputation of the military in Vietnam. Karen DeYoung, *Soldier: The Life of Colin Powell* (New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 2006), 97. As the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff after Desert Storm, Colin Powell “was determined to have the Joint Chiefs drive the military strategy train...rather than having military reorganization schemes shoved down our throats.” Andrew J. Bacevich, *American Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 134.

<sup>45</sup> Cohen, *Supreme Command*, 207.

<sup>46</sup> Including a requirement for clear objectives, vital national interests, and the exhaustion of all other options, Weinberger’s six-point test for the use of force amounted to an assurance that future policy makers would not send the military to fight another conflict such as the one in Vietnam. Caspar W. Weinberger (address, National Press Club, Washington, DC, 28 November 1984).

<sup>47</sup> Christopher O’Sullivan, *Colin Powell: American Power and Intervention from Vietnam to Iraq* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009), 111.

<sup>48</sup> Bacevich, *American Empire*, 48.

a national offense after the Soviet threat diminished.<sup>49</sup> Instead of its primary mission as a deterrent force during the Cold War, “force expended became a hallmark of U.S. policy in the 1990s.”<sup>50</sup> Bill Clinton further increased the purview of the military when he shifted the responsibility for countering terrorism from law enforcement agencies to the Pentagon by responding to terrorist bombings in Kenya with air strikes.<sup>51</sup>

As the military’s aperture widened throughout the last decade of the Twentieth Century, the 9/11 terrorist attacks marked a tipping point leading the executive branch to further extend the role of the Department of Defense.<sup>52</sup> Using the attacks as an excuse, the younger Bush’s administration claimed America’s vital national interests were jeopardized by the possibility of terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction. With a mandate for regime change the American military launched successive campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq based on the administration’s judgment that “the only way to defeat terrorism as a threat to our way of life is to stop it, eliminate it, and destroy it where it grows.”<sup>53</sup>

After quickly accomplishing the mission of regime change in both Afghanistan and Iraq, the American military’s mission transitioned to the re-establishment of effective government in both countries. Far from George W. Bush’s campaign pledge to stop using the military in a nation-building capacity, America’s military transitioned from killing and destruction to providing basic needs and re-establishing government for the local population.<sup>54</sup> Nearly a decade after the initial operations in Afghanistan, the nation-building mission continues in both countries under the presidential direction of Barack

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<sup>49</sup> According to Bacevich, George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton re-oriented American foreign policy from the previously defensive posture of the Cold War to an offensive posture aimed at creating “a world order conducive to U.S. interests.” Bacevich, *American Empire*, 6.

<sup>50</sup> Bacevich, *American Empire*, 142.

<sup>51</sup> Bacevich, *American Empire*, 153.

<sup>52</sup> “Before September 11, the conventional wisdom had been that globalization was fast making war obsolete; after September 11, the conventional wisdom was that globalization was making war an all but permanent and inescapable part of life in the twenty-first century.” Bacevich, *American Empire*, 225.

<sup>53</sup> Bush, (address, 20 September 2001).

<sup>54</sup> “Having as a candidate derided his predecessor’s experiments in “nation-building,” President Bush after September 11 declared that American’s had an abiding interest in the well-being of the long-suffering Afghan people.” Bacevich, *American Empire*, 236.

Obama. With improved security conditions in Iraq, international forces in Afghanistan recently “launched their biggest offensive of the war.”<sup>55</sup>

Regardless of the current state of security in the Middle East, numerous historical precedents accentuate the likelihood of future difficulties in both countries.<sup>56</sup> Francis Fukuyama lists nine countries in which the United States acted in some form of nation-building capacity. Of these nine, only one showed signs of long-term success.<sup>57</sup> Nearly two decades before the current conflicts in the Middle East began, George Kennan underscored the importance of humility in American foreign policy.<sup>58</sup> Instead of humility, American foreign policy after the Cold War embraced the liberal use of force with a one-size-fits-all mentality perceived by many around the globe as the same tyranny America’s founders sought to avoid.<sup>59</sup> History offers little evidence that external force applied for the purpose of building nations can set the conditions for the development of a stable, productive state.<sup>60</sup>

Beyond the challenges of nation building and the improbable odds of successfully using military force as a means to accomplish it, America will not indefinitely supply the blood and treasure required to sustain the effort.<sup>61</sup> According to Bacevich, “the [2005] Pentagon budget...[was] 12 percent larger than the average defense budget of the Cold War era.”<sup>62</sup> Given scarce resources and an unwillingness to sacrifice life and limb, the

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<sup>55</sup> Atia Abawi, “NATO Launches Major Offensive in Afghanistan,” *Cable News Network* (Kabul, Afghanistan, 13 February 2010), <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/asiapcf/02/12/afghanistan.offensive/index.html> (accessed 15 February 2010).

<sup>56</sup> Labeling the record for successful state-building from external forces as dismal, Fukuyama’s research concludes that domestic demand is the most important indicator of the potential for successful state-building. Francis Fukuyama, *State-building: Governance and World Order in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 35-36.

<sup>57</sup> Citing the research of Max Boot, Fukuyama highlights United State interventions in Cuba, the Philippines, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panama, Nicaragua, South Korea, and South Vietnam. Fukuyama suggests only South Korea achieved long-term economic growth, and their success was much more due to their efforts than anything done by the United States. Fukuyama, *State-building*, 39.

<sup>58</sup> Kennan suggested “there are problems in this world that we will not be able to solve, depths into which it will not be useful or effective for us to plunge, dilemmas in other regions of the globe that will have to find their solution without our involvement.” George F. Kennan, *American Diplomacy: Expanded Edition* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 178.

<sup>59</sup> Bacevich, *The New American Militarism*, 14.

<sup>60</sup> As noted by Bacevich, “coercion does not win hearts and minds; at best, it temporarily stays the hand.” Bacevich, *American Empire*, 239.

<sup>61</sup> In 1941, Senator Robert Taft said, “The American people don’t want to rule the world, and we are not equipped to do it. Such imperialism is wholly foreign to our ideals of democracy and freedom.” Quoted in Bacevich, *The New American Militarism*, 14.

<sup>62</sup> Bacevich, *The New American Militarism*, 17.

American people will increasingly question the value of every dollar spent on operations in the Middle East. The success of these operations will be measured by the respective countries' capacity for self-government. Unfortunately, Fukuyama's research suggests American and international nation-building efforts in other countries resulted in less, rather than more, capacity because well-endowed external actors actually stunt the growth of indigenous institutions.<sup>63</sup>

### **The United States Military: Politics and Professionalism**

Shortly after the September 2001 terrorist attacks, George W. Bush's words celebrated America's values when he claimed "We're in a fight for our principles, and our first responsibility is to live by them."<sup>64</sup> Surveying the last decade's enormous expenditures, thousands of lives lost, and continuing fear of terrorist strikes calls into question the foundational principles from which current military operations emerged. While extensive literature describes the intentions and actions of presidential administrations, few writings examine the aggregate influence of the military's principles on policy decisions. Although senior military leaders do not unilaterally determine national policy, they certainly influence its development where it concerns matters of defense. If the professional officer corps does provide expert advice, and the military remains as influential as Eisenhower suggested, the military's resistance to or support of nation-building operations undoubtedly affected policy maker decisions. This analysis illuminates the role of America's senior military leadership, personified by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in determining the policy ends of nation building since the end of the Cold War.

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<sup>63</sup> Fukuyama, *State-building*, 103.

<sup>64</sup> Bush (address, 20 September 2001).

## Chapter 2

### Colin Powell and the Post-Cold War Transition

*Much good can come from the prudent use of power. And much good can come of this: A world once divided into two armed camps now recognizes one sole and preeminent power, the United States of America. And they regard this with no dread. For the world trusts us with power, and the world is right. They trust us to be fair and restrained. They trust us to be on the side of decency. They trust us to do what's right.*

-George H. W. Bush

*You show me a general in Washington who ain't political and I will show you a guy who ain't gonna get promoted again, and probably should not be a general in the first place.*

-Colin Powell

*Had we done that [pursued regime change in Iraq], we would have gotten ourselves into the biggest quagmire you can imagine trying to sort out 2,000 years of Mesopotamian history.*

-Colin Powell

During his January 1992 state of the union address, George H. W. Bush claimed that the death of communism represented a change in the world of “almost Biblical proportions.”<sup>1</sup> Emerging victorious from both the Cold War and the more recent conflict with Iraq, Bush described his vision for America as the leader of a free and democratic world. Despite the celebratory tenor of his speech, the president warned against making military cuts so deep they would result in the disarray of the post-Vietnam era.<sup>2</sup> With a nod to caution, he reminded his audience that “only the dead have seen the end of

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<sup>1</sup> George H.W. Bush (address, joint session of Congress, Washington, DC, 28 January 1992).

<sup>2</sup> “There are those who say that now we can turn away from the world, that we have no special role, no special place. But we are the United States of America, the leader of the West that has become the leader of the world. And as long as I am President, I will continue to lead in support of freedom everywhere, not out of arrogance, not out of altruism, but for the safety and security of our children. This is a fact: Strength in the pursuit of peace is no vice; isolationism in the pursuit of security is no virtue.” Bush (address, 28 January 1992).

conflict.”<sup>3</sup> Bush’s prudent words reflected his recent experience leading the military and the nation during the uncertain days leading up to Desert Storm.

America’s way forward in the Middle East emerged from a series of decisions made while coping with the uncertainties, limitations, and constraints that accompany every human conflict. After Iraq’s unexpected invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, Bush’s national security advisors struggled with the development of an appropriate response.<sup>4</sup> With options ranging from the defense of Saudi Arabia to the rescue of Kuwait, Colin Powell emerged as a voice of caution in the debate. Repeating questions comprising a use-of-force doctrine still bearing his name, Powell felt his experience in Vietnam uniquely qualified him to express concerns about the use of force at the outset of the discussion.<sup>5</sup>

### **The Development of a Chairman**

The twelfth chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the first to serve a complete four-year term under the landmark Goldwater-Nichols legislation, Colin Powell brought a wealth of political experience to the Bush administration.<sup>6</sup> A former White House Fellow, Powell had only recently left his post as Ronald Reagan’s National Security Advisor before Bush appointed him chairman.<sup>7</sup> Although familiarity allowed Powell to quickly understand matters of policy, Dick Cheney believed the chairman’s role was limited to military matters. The distinction became significant after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. At the first National Security Council meeting after the invasion, Powell and Cheney disagreed about the appropriate American response. After the meeting, the secretary of defense told Powell, “Colin, you’re Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. You’re not Secretary of State. You’re not the National Security Adviser anymore. And you’re not Secretary of Defense. So stick to military matters.”<sup>8</sup> In the

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<sup>3</sup> Bush (address, 28 January 1992).

<sup>4</sup> Karen DeYoung, *Soldier: The Life of Colin Powell* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 192-96.

<sup>5</sup> DeYoung, *Soldier*, 194.

<sup>6</sup> Powell intended to capitalize on the changes rendered by Goldwater-Nichols to provide advice to the civilian leadership that reflected his own views and not those of the other service chiefs. DeYoung, *Soldier*, 185.

<sup>7</sup> Powell went to his fellowship with the intent to narrow the gap between the White House and the military. DeYoung, *Soldier*, 102.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Christopher O’Sullivan, *Colin Powell: American Power and Intervention from Vietnam to Iraq* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009), 87.

ensuing preparation for conflict, Cheney wanted a menu of military options, while Powell wanted clear political objectives.<sup>9</sup> After his time handling significant matters of state as Reagan's national security adviser, Powell felt frustrated that he was now expected to stay in his lane as a military advisor.<sup>10</sup>

Powell's aggravation at Cheney's reproach only increased based on his strong beliefs about the appropriate use of military force. The chairman's views on when and how to use force derived from his earlier experiences. As a junior officer, Powell had distinguished himself from his peers with flattering performance reports and his love of the military.<sup>11</sup> After serving two tours in Vietnam, Powell concluded America's warriors had answered their nation's call but the country's leaders had poorly "conceived, conducted and explained" the war.<sup>12</sup> Fundamentally, he believed that senior military leaders had failed their subordinates by not speaking truth to power and political leaders had failed at their responsibility to supply the necessary manpower.<sup>13</sup> Like many of his contemporary officers, Powell believed "the starting point for retrieving professional legitimacy lay in avoiding altogether future campaigns even remotely similar to Vietnam."<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately, these officers found little respite in the years following the conflict.

Published in 1985, *Military Incompetence* describes the military shambles that continued to persist a decade after hostilities ended in Vietnam. Listing numerous military failures between the Sontay prison raid in 1970 and Grenada in 1983, Richard Gabriel levies the responsibility for incompetence on "the military commanders who are given the task of planning and ensuring that U.S. forces are combat-ready." He concludes "the evidence is overwhelming—they have failed to fulfill this

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<sup>9</sup> O'Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 87. Cheney also told Powell "his job was not to force a discussion of press Bush for policy answers; it was to provide a range of military options and then shut up." Quoted in DeYoung, *Soldier*, 194-95.

<sup>10</sup> O'Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 86-87.

<sup>11</sup> Evaluating Powell's performance as a lieutenant, his supervisors described him as someone who "expresses his opinions...convincingly," and who "should be considered for more rapid promotion than his contemporaries." Additionally, based largely on the chaotic events of the American civil rights movement in society at large, Powell determined "the real world began at the post." DeYoung, *Soldier*, 39, 70.

<sup>12</sup> DeYoung, *Soldier*, 91.

<sup>13</sup> DeYoung, *Soldier*, 96-97.

<sup>14</sup> Andrew J. Bacevich, *The New American Militarism: How Americans are Seduced by War* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), 42.

responsibility.”<sup>15</sup> Despite the ongoing setbacks, Powell’s love of the military provided the necessary motivation to stay on active duty in order to fix a broken army after Vietnam.<sup>16</sup> During these years, his reputation as an outstanding professional with great potential continued to grow.<sup>17</sup>

Powell’s love of the military and his experience in Vietnam caused him to view civil-military relations as a two-way responsibility. He believed the “chain of command ran both ways, obligating officers to obey civilian policy makers while imposing equal responsibility on the upper echelons to protect the lives and interests of the troops below.”<sup>18</sup> Based on this idea, Powell believed senior military leaders have a responsibility to say what force can or cannot do in any potential situation.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, the moment of decision remained sacred. Once the policy maker determines a decision, “loyalty means executing the decision as if it were your own.”<sup>20</sup> Powell maintained faith in the chain of command, up to and including its civilian leadership.<sup>21</sup>

### **Results of the Chairman’s Advice**

In nearly three months after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Bush still had not made a decision to use force. During this time, Powell continued to advise caution against doing so without exhausting all other options.<sup>22</sup> After months of Powell’s cautions and warnings in the face of Bush’s determination to “do something,” the president finally decided to issue an ultimatum.<sup>23</sup> As the administration continued to pressure Saddam

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<sup>15</sup> Richard A. Gabriel, *Military Incompetence* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1985), 34.

<sup>16</sup> DeYoung, *Soldier*, 98.

<sup>17</sup> DeYoung, *Soldier*, 99.

<sup>18</sup> DeYoung, *Soldier*, 142.

<sup>19</sup> As chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Powell saw his role as laying out “to my political leaders the full range of military options, to let them know what we can do, to let them know how we can solve a political problem, to let them know where I do not believe military force will solve a political problem, and to make them understand all of the consequences of the use of military force.” David Roth, *Sacred Honor, Colin Powell: The Inside Account of His Life and Triumphs* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), 190-91.

<sup>20</sup> DeYoung, *Soldier*, 146.

<sup>21</sup> Roth, *Sacred Honor*, 197.

<sup>22</sup> Powell briefed Bush in person in September, warning him of the potential for harm from an imprudent use of force. A month later, Powell continued to beat the drum of caution while privately discussing the matter with Secretary of State Baker. DeYoung, *Soldier*, 197, 198-99.

<sup>23</sup> “As Bush’s rhetoric about Iraq became increasingly extreme, Powell, uncomfortable with hyperbole, worried about such demonization, fearing that just as he had with Noriega, Bush was building Hussein up

Hussein with the diplomatic and economic tools at their disposal, Bush finally decreed that his enemy would face military action if he did not extricate his forces from Kuwait by the end of January 1991. Having voiced his warnings and exhausted his levers of influence within the administration, Powell relegated his skepticism about the president's ultimatum to his private thoughts. The decision had been made and he resolved to follow the orders of his commander in chief.<sup>24</sup>

Despite far fewer casualties and far greater ease of achieving military gains than pre-conflict projections, United States policy makers specifically chose against a nation-building strategy in Iraq. Instead of completely destroying the Iraqi military and toppling the Ba'athist regime, the American-led coalition stopped the operation after achieving the stated objective of removing the Iraqis from Kuwait.<sup>25</sup> Although debate continues on the decision's merit, Powell listed four major accomplishments of this use of force in the Middle East: the stated policy goal was clear; the military was resourced to achieve it; popular support was gained and maintained; and an international precedent for dealing with territorial aggression was set.<sup>26</sup> In short, Powell believed he and the administration had succeeded in achieving his personal goal of not leading the nation into another Vietnam.

### The Genesis of a New Doctrine

Following their decisive defeat of Iraqi forces, the American military's stature as a fundamentally sound and necessary institution was cemented into the foundation of modern American society. In an article in *Foreign Affairs* after the war, Powell used the prestige garnered by America's military success in the Middle East to stress the importance of leading in a new world absent a rival superpower. Highlighting the beliefs responsible for his success in the Persian Gulf, Powell suggested the importance of overwhelming force, clear and achievable objectives, and using force only as a last resort.<sup>27</sup> Additionally, he claimed, "If force is used imprecisely or out of frustration

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to be a bigger threat than he really was, unwittingly making his removal a U.S. military objective." O'Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 88.

<sup>24</sup> DeYoung, *Soldier*, 200-01.

<sup>25</sup> DeYoung, *Soldier*, 208.

<sup>26</sup> DeYoung, *Soldier*, 208.

<sup>27</sup> Colin Powell, "US Forces: Challenges Ahead," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 5 (Winter 1992/1993): 37-39.

rather than clear analysis, the situation can be made worse.”<sup>28</sup> Powell understood that the limited objective of removing Iraqi forces from Kuwait made operational success possible for the military to achieve. Despite his pragmatic warning, victories in the Cold War and Desert Storm reinforced the expanding popular notion that the military could efficiently and effectively achieve all political ends.<sup>29</sup> America’s fascination with military capability as displayed in Iraq created the perception that military supremacy, rather than military adequacy, was possible and worthy of pursuit.<sup>30</sup>

### **The Dawn of a New Era in National Security**

Contrary to the public’s perception of Bush administration harmony leading to victory in the gulf, not everyone subscribed to Powell’s espoused beliefs regarding the use of military force. “Shrewd media management and a public façade of unity...obscured the differences the war had provoked, particularly between Cheney and Powell over matters of intervention and the Powell Doctrine.”<sup>31</sup> Bacevich further illustrates policy maker frustrations with the limitations Powell advocated by claiming, “in the post-Cold War era, the terrain where civilian interests, values, and fears intersected with those of the military became fiercely contested.”<sup>32</sup> With his political acumen and deep-seated beliefs, Powell wielded the new powers granted under Goldwater-Nichols to ensure military concerns were not cast aside during or after Desert Storm.

Determined to avoid the development of another hollow army, Powell used his position and status as an American hero to prevent the erosion of the military at the hands of policy makers. The chairman “was determined to have the Joint Chiefs drive the

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<sup>28</sup> Powell, “US Forces: Challenges Ahead,” 39-40.

<sup>29</sup> According to Bacevich, “At the end of the Cold War, Americans said yes to military power.” Bacevich, *The New American Militarism*, 14. O’Sullivan suggests, “although the Gulf War was perceived as a triumph for the Powell Doctrine, it also made future interventions more likely. The quick victory left the illusion that war could be antiseptic, without costs. It created a mythology that military power could achieve anything and, with the Soviet Union in decline, that there would be few restraints on the future use of military force. Powell did not succumb to this illusion, but others, such as Cheney and Wolfowitz, did.” O’Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 92.

<sup>30</sup> “After the Cold War, the measure of adequacy was no longer simply military strength; it had become military supremacy.” Andrew J. Bacevich, *American Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 126.

<sup>31</sup> O’Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 89.

<sup>32</sup> Bacevich, *American Empire*, 172.

military strategy train...rather than having military reorganization schemes shoved down our throats.”<sup>33</sup> Bacevich asserts the United States military of the 1990s “functioned as an independent and powerful policy advocate that civilian officials ignored at their own peril.”<sup>34</sup> Despite Powell’s reputation for sagacious caution, overwhelming success in Desert Storm and greater independence under Goldwater-Nichols resulted in a powerful military agenda difficult for civilian leaders to control.

Concerned over the potential for extensive military cutbacks after winning the Cold War and defeating Iraqi aggression, Powell and the Joint Chiefs sought a method by which to explain their relevance to United States national security interests. Nearly a decade earlier, George Kennan suggested demonizing the Soviet Union post-World War II and going into debt to increase United States nuclear capacity resulted in the “extreme militarization not only of our thought but of our lives that has become the mark of this post-war age. We have made ourselves dependent on this invidious national practice—so much so that it may fairly be said that if we did not have the Russians...we would have to invent some adversary to take their place.”<sup>35</sup> Almost as if to prove Kennan’s point, O’Sullivan describes how the military attempted to create a need for itself after the end of the Cold War.<sup>36</sup> In the absence of the Soviet threat, the Bush administration used the Defense Planning Guidance Paper of 1992 as a foundation to redefine the national security environment by inflating potential threats in a way that precluded extensive cuts in defense spending.<sup>37</sup>

### **Transition to a New National Security Strategy**

During the Bush administration, each subsequent national security strategy (NSS) policy statement increasingly underscored the threat of what were previously considered concerns too insignificant to specifically list in the document. Initially, the stated objective of defense policy remained deterrence. In the event of low intensity conflict,

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<sup>33</sup> Quoted in Bacevich, *American Empire*, 134.

<sup>34</sup> Bacevich, *American Empire*, 171.

<sup>35</sup> George F. Kennan, *American Diplomacy: Expanded Edition* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 170-73.

<sup>36</sup> O’Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 81.

<sup>37</sup> O’Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 92.

the 1988 NSS recommended against direct involvement by American military forces.<sup>38</sup> Two years later, adjusting to a world absent the Soviet Union, Bush expressed increasing concern regarding conflicts in third world countries.<sup>39</sup> He also warned of a threat from “the scourge of terrorism, and of states that sponsor it.”<sup>40</sup> As the Soviet Union declined, the Bush administration made the case that threats from smaller states and non-state actors were filling the void of United States national security concerns. Interestingly, the 1990 NSS goes one step further. Beyond enumerating these emerging threats, the document also specifically stated the administration would seek “new and imaginative ways to apply flexible general purpose forces to these problems.”<sup>41</sup> Despite the document’s publication only months before the invasion of Kuwait, the 1990 NSS failed to mention any threat from the country of Iraq or its leader, Saddam Hussein.

Published after the conclusion of hostilities in Iraq, the 1991 NSS sought to put America’s actions in the Middle East into perspective. Almost as if to assure the international community of America’s desire to avoid future conflict, the document concluded, “we cannot be the world’s policeman with responsibility for solving all the world’s security problems.”<sup>42</sup> Although it preserved the right to act on behalf of American interests, the 1991 NSS stated, “in South Asia, as elsewhere, we strongly believe that security is best served by resolving disputes through negotiations rather than military pressure.”<sup>43</sup> Influenced by the desire to pacify concerns of other nations in the

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<sup>38</sup> “The most appropriate application of U.S. military power [for low intensity conflict] is usually indirect through security assistance—training, advisory help, logistics support, and the supply of essential military equipment. Recipients of such assistance bear the primary responsibility for promoting their own security interests with the U.S. aid provided.” The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: Office of the President, January 1988), 35.

<sup>39</sup> “In a new era, some Third World conflicts may no longer take place against the backdrop of superpower competition. Yet many will, for a variety of reasons, continue to threaten U.S. interests. The erosion of U.S.-Soviet bipolarity could permit and in some ways encourage the growth of these challenges.” The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: Office of the President, March 1990), 6.

<sup>40</sup> The White House, *National Security Strategy* (March 1990), 6.

<sup>41</sup> Regarding low intensity conflict, the strategy stated, “it is not possible to prevent or deter conflict at the lower end of the conflict spectrum in the same way or to the same degree as at the higher. American forces therefore must be capable of dealing effectively with the full range of threats, including insurgency and terrorism.” The White House, *National Security Strategy* (March 1990), 28.

<sup>42</sup> The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: Office of the President, August 1991), 2.

<sup>43</sup> “In the end, we are answerable to our own interests and our own conscience—to our ideals and to history—for what we do with the power we have.” The White House, *National Security Strategy* (August 1991), 2, 10.

international community, the administration's statements in the 1991 NSS stand in stark contrast to those made in the previous and following documents.

In its final NSS, the Bush Administration once again underscored the potential for destruction from conflict in and among smaller states. The January 1993 NSS stated, “even as the danger of global war recedes, the potential for smaller but still highly destructive conflicts between nations and within nations is growing.”<sup>44</sup> Seeking middle ground between a need to confront this emerging threat and an international community of states concerned about a global hegemon willing to use military force, the administration hinted at the discriminate use of force and the need to build an international coalition.<sup>45</sup> The policy statement stressed the importance of American leadership as a means of encouraging allies to fulfill their responsibilities in the maintenance of global security. However, it stopped short of threatening the use of military force against states sponsoring terrorist organizations.<sup>46</sup>

### **The First National Military Strategy Document**

During a meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev while Powell served as Reagan’s National Security Advisor in April 1988, the Soviet leader asked a prophetic question. Gorbachev, knowing Powell was a military officer, asked him, “What are you going to do now that you’ve lost your best enemy?”<sup>47</sup> Four years later, in accordance with his desire to avoid a military weakened by ill-advised defense reforms after Desert Storm, Powell elected to author the first national strategy document representing the views of the senior military leadership. In the most influential military strategy statement since Harry Truman approved NSC-68 in 1950, Powell published the first document titled the National Military Strategy of the United States (NMS) in January 1992.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: Office of the President, January 1993), ii.

<sup>45</sup> The 1993 NSS stated, “there are limits to what we can or should do—we will have to be selective and discriminate in our global undertakings.” The White House, *National Security Strategy* (January 1993), 3.

<sup>46</sup> The 1993 NSS threatened “international isolation and economic repercussions” for “states that practice or actively support terrorism.” The White House, *National Security Strategy* (January 1993), 3, 18.

<sup>47</sup> Quoted in DeYoung, *Soldier*, 167.

<sup>48</sup> Advocating a policy of containment using conventional military forces to stem the tide of communist expansion, the National Security Council report titled NSC-68 concluded a national defense strategy excessively reliant on nuclear deterrence did not provide a robust enough security apparatus to protect American interests around the globe. A controversial statement of engagement, NSC-68’s “rearmament,

Powell's military strategy statement met multiple objectives. Despite the uncertainty of a new international power structure absent the Soviet Union, the 1992 NMS provided a rationale for maintaining a strong United States military. Stating the primary threat to national security was uncertainty, Powell developed the concept of a Base Force as a tool for reducing the military's size while retaining the capability to rapidly generate the forces necessary to face a developing threat.<sup>49</sup> Warning against drastic reductions executed too quickly, his strategy stated, "the plan for downsizing and reconfiguring our forces to the Base Force level is both prudent and fiscally attainable. Faster reductions risk the danger of destroying the cohesion, morale, and military effectiveness of today's forces."<sup>50</sup> In the concept of a Base Force, Powell had found a mechanism to avoid the disastrous reductions in force he had experienced following Vietnam.

Beyond maintaining a strong military, Powell took a large step from the previous policy of containment to a strategy of decisive force. Another attempt to exorcise the ghosts of Vietnam, Powell believed his inclusion of decisive force clarified his desire for clear political objectives and the avoidance of "murky quagmires."<sup>51</sup> For Powell, it also offered the assurance of a well-supported and robust military effort.<sup>52</sup> In addition to clear objectives and adequate resources, his inclusion of decisive force underscored the

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and the American commitment of ground forces to Europe, was opposed by those who distrusted this departure from the past norms of American policy ('do not commit yourself to any fighting abroad unless it can not possibly be avoided'), by those who felt that the costs would be intolerable and that NATO Allies ought to look after themselves more, and by supporters of the Air Force, with a confidence in airpower as the sole requirement for US security." Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, 3rd ed. (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 66-71.

<sup>49</sup> According to the 1992 NMS, "the real threat we now face is the threat of the unknown, the uncertain. The threat of instability and being unprepared to handle a crisis or war that no one predicted or expected." Additionally, the strategy describes the loss of the Soviet Union as a yardstick by which to measure America's military capabilities. With their demise, Powell's new yardstick was a scalable Base Force, designed to avoid the gutting of America's armed forces in the absence of its chief rival. Department of Defense, *National Military Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, January 1992), 4.

<sup>50</sup> Department of Defense, *National Military Strategy* (January 1992), 18.

<sup>51</sup> "Powell actually holds that decisive or 'overwhelming' force is important to assure that military victory is achieved." Roth, *Sacred Honor*, 246.

<sup>52</sup> During the build-up to Desert Storm, Powell promised Norman Schwarzkopf "If we go to war, we will not do it halfway. The United States military will give you whatever you need to do it right." Roth, *Sacred Honor*, 200.

understanding of armed conflict as a contest with a clear winner and loser.<sup>53</sup> Based on his belief that the use of force is a last resort, Powell designed his strategy around the idea that the purpose of the military is “to resolve any conflict in which we become involved swiftly and decisively, in concert with our allies and friends.”<sup>54</sup>

Despite well-defined notions of the appropriate way to use the military, Powell explicitly warned against a “set of principles or a when-to-go-to-war doctrine.”<sup>55</sup> The chairman explained the imprudence of letting enemies know when the United States will use military force. He also stressed the importance of examining each situation on its own merits.<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, his depictions of when to use force and how to use it effectively gained notoriety as the Powell Doctrine. Closely related to the doctrine espoused by the secretary of defense in 1984, some combined both systems into one and labeled the resultant the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine. Slightly different than Weinberger’s six criteria, Powell believed senior leaders had to ask themselves a series of questions to determine whether or not the situation warranted the use of military force. Karen DeYoung describes the Powell Doctrine as “no military commitment without decisive force, a clear objective and popular support...and you’ve got to go in to win.”<sup>57</sup> Whether considering Weinberger’s tests or Powell’s questions, the purpose of both was to protect the military from employment in ill-suited circumstances and to inform political leaders of the limits of force application.

Unfortunately, Powell failed at both in Somalia. Given Powell’s penchant for restraint, his support of military options in Somalia defies explanation.<sup>58</sup> His skepticism

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<sup>53</sup> The 1992 NMS states, “one of the essential elements of our national military strategy is the ability to rapidly assemble the forces needed to win—the concept of applying decisive force to overwhelm our adversaries and thereby terminate conflicts swiftly with minimum loss of life.” Department of Defense, *National Military Strategy* (January 1992), 10.

<sup>54</sup> Regarding conflict resolution, the 1992 NMS states, “prior to committing US forces to combat it must be determined that US vital interests are at risk and that political, diplomatic, and economic measures have failed to correct the situation or have been ruled out for some other reason.” Department of Defense, *National Military Strategy* (January 1992), 15.

<sup>55</sup> Powell, “US Forces: Challenges Ahead,” 37.

<sup>56</sup> Powell, “US Forces: Challenges Ahead,” 37-38.

<sup>57</sup> DeYoung, *Soldier*, 210.

<sup>58</sup> Jon Western argues, “Bush and his advisors concluded that Clinton would likely alter public attitudes toward Bosnia and launch some form of military action there. In response to these events, Bush and Powell concluded that if the United States was going to intervene in response to a humanitarian crisis, it would be in Somalia and not Bosnia.” Quoted in Peter D. Feaver, *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 241. According to DeYoung, Powell later “yielded to requests from the field” for more military forces after four American soldiers were

about the use of force in Kuwait had helped delay the conflict, allowed critical debate over American interests in the region that resulted in specific political objectives, and prepared the military for the pending fight. In contrast, Powell's willingness to use force in Somalia prevented beneficial developments in any of these areas.<sup>59</sup> Three days after Powell left office, eighteen American Special Forces members were killed and two of their corpses were dragged through the streets of downtown Mogadishu as the images were broadcast around the world.<sup>60</sup> Although he later admitted his recommendation to surge military forces was a mistake, the operation's failure supports Powell's larger conviction that the inappropriate use of force can make things worse.<sup>61</sup>

Perhaps one explanation for Powell's support of military intervention in Somalia lies in a statement made in the 1992 NMS. With words destined to find application throughout the remainder of the decade, the strategy claims "there are cases where the swift and effective application of force such as a preemptory or retaliatory measure can defuse a crisis before it develops into a situation requiring the deployment of large formations."<sup>62</sup> Seemingly at odds with Powell's representation of prudent military leadership, this statement leaves the determination of an effective application of force to situational interpretation by the decision maker. Further, instead of tying the use of force to immediate national interests, the statement suggests the potential for a significant conflict in the future may necessitate force application. Such a whimsical notion equates military force with other instruments of power instead of adhering to the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine notion that military force is a last resort to be used only after all other

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killed when their jeep hit a land mine. This approval of expanding the nature of the Somalia force beyond its original humanitarian relief mission is what defies adequate explanation. Powell's reluctance to conducting any military operation without overwhelming force should have precluded the possibility for mission creep into combat operations. DeYoung's account alludes to the chairman's belief that Special Forces organizations "threw tried-and-true military doctrine to the wind." Perhaps because his mission expansion included them, and not his beloved army, Powell gave in to their requests to try. DeYoung, *Soldier*, 237.

<sup>59</sup> O'Sullivan claims "On the question of intervention in Somalia, Powell dropped much of his usual caution." In a move equivalent to failing to look before leaping, United States military operations in Somalia in 1993 lacked well-articulated political objectives, popular support, and adequate planning. O'Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 108-09.

<sup>60</sup> DeYoung, *Soldier*, 238.

<sup>61</sup> Roth, *Sacred Honor*, 246.

<sup>62</sup> Some refer to this statement as representative of Powell's softer side. Department of Defense, *National Military Strategy* (January 1992), 15.

options have been exhausted and only for the purpose of protecting America's vital national security interests.

## A New Administration

Shortly after arriving in 1993, Bill Clinton's administration revealed its desire to broaden the scope of interests requiring the use of force. With discussions of a potential peace dividend in the absence of a peer competitor, the administration felt the need to justify military expenditures. Expanding the application of force to solve political problems offered the requisite justification. Yet the experience in Somalia cast a long shadow over Powell and the new administration destined to last far beyond the chairman's departure. The tragedy in Mogadishu had hardened his conviction that the military should not be used for peacekeeping missions difficult to tie to America's vital national interests. Yet the military's stunning success in the Persian Gulf caused others to believe in the military's ability to solve foreign policy crises.<sup>63</sup>

As conditions in the Balkans worsened, the administration felt it had to do something. When Clinton asked Powell for options to handle the crisis, Powell refused to provide answers that supported military intervention.<sup>64</sup> Powell used his authority regarding military matters to claim that freeing the Sarajevo airport from the surrounding Serb artillery "would take tens of thousands of troops, cost billions of dollars, probably result in numerous casualties, and require a long and open-ended commitment of U.S. forces."<sup>65</sup> Yet Powell's framing of the problem as impossible infuriated the administration.<sup>66</sup> Despite the reluctance of others to challenge Powell's expertise, Madeleine Albright asked, "what's the point of having this superb military that you're

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<sup>63</sup> O'Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 110.

<sup>64</sup> "He did not frame the issue in a way that made it possible for the president to do what he wanted," says former Air Force Chief of Staff General Merrill "Tony" McPeak, who served under Powell from 1990 to 1993. "Instead, he said, 'here's Option A, it is really stupid. Here's Option B, it is dumber than dirt.' It wasn't disloyalty, it wasn't because it was a Democratic administration; it was just because it was Powell's view. But when the president asks you to do something, you sit down and figure out how to do it." Quoted in Michael Steinbrenner, "Misoverestimated," *The American Prospect*, 15 November 2004, <http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=misoverestimated> (accessed 1 March 2010).

<sup>65</sup> O'Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 110.

<sup>66</sup> Powell referred to himself as "the skunk at the picnic." O'Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 111.

always talking about if we can't use it?"<sup>67</sup> Powell resented her question, responding that "American G.I.s were not toy soldiers to be moved around on some sort of global game board."<sup>68</sup> Similarly he continued his resistance, initiated during the Bush administration, to interfering in Haiti based on the difficulty of developing an adequate exit strategy.<sup>69</sup> Believing he had become an obstacle to accomplishing their foreign policy goals, the Clinton administration's desire to use the military to accomplish its foreign policy ambitions guided their primary requirement for a new chairman: not "another Powell."<sup>70</sup>

## Summary

Powell's tenure as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff marked a transition in both the national security environment and the influence of the military in domestic politics. Disintegration of the Soviet Union ended a threat previous administrations referenced to justify deficit spending for the purpose of maintaining an abnormally strong military during a time of relative peace. Already a break with American tradition, the large standing military force of the Cold War instilled into the American system of government an influential military-industrial complex. Exploiting the legitimacy afforded the chairman by Goldwater-Nichols, Powell further took advantage of his status as a hero of Desert Storm to prevent immediate and drastic cuts in America's armed forces. He developed the Base Force to justify a large military despite the loss of the Soviet threat. Finally, the Clinton administration's desire to expand the definition of instances requiring the use of force provided another opportunity to justify the expense of a large standing military after the nation's primary threat all but disappeared.

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<sup>67</sup> Despite her question, Albright said "In the face of all his medals and prestige, I found it hard to argue with Powell about the proper way to employ American force. Even though I was a member of the Principals Committee, I was still a mere female civilian. I did however, think then as now that the lessons of Vietnam could be learned too well." Quoted in O'Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 111.

<sup>68</sup> Quoted in O'Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 111.

<sup>69</sup> O'Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 112.

<sup>70</sup> Peter J. Roman and David W. Tarr, "Military Professionalism and Policymaking," in *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security*, ed. Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 242. Feaver uses agency theory to describe the complex relationship between policy makers and the military that leads to instances of military shirking and working. In Feaver's model, Powell's resistance to the administration's desire for action is shirking. He suggests "the military can engage in behavior that constitutes shirking even if it is technically following the explicit orders of a civilian principal. The military can shirk by shading its advice so the civilian principal chooses to give an order contrary to the one that he would have given had the military advice been more sincere." Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 287. The administration later found a way to make the military work after appointing a new chairman.

Undoubtedly, America's recently achieved position of lone world superpower provided unprecedented freedom of action for United States political leaders. With few perceived consequences for actions and an administration's desire to do something, the perception of the military as a useful tool for achieving America's foreign policy objectives seemed natural. Yet Powell's desire to protect his institution prevented the earlier use of America's military for purposes unrelated to deterring threats to America's vital national security interests.

Beyond changes in the national security environment, the Goldwater-Nichols legislation provided Powell a pedestal from which to express his strong desire to protect the military from ill-suited missions. Instead of the previous bickering over roles and missions that characterized the services' behavior during the revolt of the admirals, and the lack of unity of command that resulted in failure of joint operations during follow-on operations, the chairman became the president's chief advisor on military matters.<sup>71</sup> Well versed in the nuances of domestic politics based on his previous positions, Powell vigorously wielded the authority of his newly defined position. After his advice and leadership appeared to yield enormous success in Desert Storm, his reputation preceded him in the Clinton administration. Hardened in his convictions by the tragedy in Somalia, his resistance to any military operations not conforming to the lessons he learned from Vietnam caused the newly elected administration to seek out a more compliant chairman more easily convinced to take on a broader range of missions.

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<sup>71</sup> Barlow describes the fractious state of interservice rivalry and the multiplicity of options for roles and missions explored by the service chiefs immediately following World War II. Jeffrey G. Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals* (Washington, DC, Government Reprints Press, 2001). Horwood further describes a convoluted chain of command reflecting little coordination and unity of purpose that led to numerous failures during the American experience in Vietnam. Ian Horwood, *Interservice Rivalry and Airpower in the Vietnam War* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2006).

## **Chapter 3**

### **American Hegemony Before 9/11**

*One of the most striking features of the current period is the mismatch between our rhetoric and our resources. The administration's announced strategy of enlarging the community of democratic market-economy nations implies a growing demand on resources. The end of the cold war, however, has resulted in a steady and substantial decline in defense spending and other resources for intervention... While U.S. forces are sufficient for large-scale intervention, they are not optimized for peace-keeping and other peace operations, or for other types of low-level conflict. These operations demand specialized training and preparation.*

-Final Report of the Eighty-Fifth American Assembly  
*U.S. Intervention Policy for the Post-Cold War World*

*[Somalia] was also a major tragedy for anyone who believed that America had an increased role to play in humanitarian peacekeeping missions.*

-David Halberstam

*The boundaries between the professional advisory role and that of policymaker are difficult and often impossible for senior officers to sustain.*

-Peter J. Roman and David W. Tarr

The nature of the relationship between the commander in chief and the military drastically changed after the inauguration of William Jefferson Clinton as the 42nd president of the United States in 1993. In contrast to the previous president and his military experience as a United States Navy fighter pilot in World War II, Clinton's reputation as a draft dodger during the Vietnam conflict inspired significant resentment among American military leaders.<sup>1</sup> Despite disagreements over the role of the military within the previous Bush administration, the professional and productive relationship between the chief executive and his senior military advisor ensured the military had ample, unambiguous direction. Beyond disputes over the appropriate use of force,

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen J. Cimbala, "Conclusions," in *Clinton and Post-Cold War Defense* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), 177.

Clinton presided over eight years of bickering between military leaders and the administration regarding issues ranging from reductions in force structure and pay to allowing homosexuals to serve openly in the military.<sup>2</sup> Dale Herspring suggests the new president lacked the leadership qualities required of a commander in chief.<sup>3</sup> Peter Feaver underscores the effect of Clinton's relationship with the military using an illustration: "like a divorced parent trying to get a child to support a custody arrangement, the White House effort to win the allegiance of those who were already obligated to obey only reversed the lines of de facto authority."<sup>4</sup> Based on the rocky relationship with the White House, military leaders increasingly sought political power to resist policies they did not support.

### Rude Awakening

Aware of his dearth of experience in foreign policy and military matters, Bill Clinton desired to focus his attention on domestic policy during his first year as president.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, his disdain for the political implications of the foreign policy failure in Somalia forced the administration to consider critically its views on the use of force.<sup>6</sup> During a conversation with Powell on the day of his military retirement, the chairman revealed his realization that sending military forces into the country had been a mistake. He warned Clinton, "We've got to find a way to get out, and soon."<sup>7</sup> Only two days later, the Mogadishu tragedy highlighted limitations on the use of force and left in its wake a vivid memory. Attempting to avoid a similar foreign policy catastrophe, the administration unequivocally refused to send combat troops to stabilize war-torn Rwanda

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<sup>2</sup> Dale E. Herspring, *The Pentagon and the Presidency: Civil-Military Relations from FDR to George W. Bush* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 335-36.

<sup>3</sup> Describing the events leading up to the air war over Kosovo, Herspring states, "the situation in Washington, however, was much the same as it had been over the last six years since Clinton took office. The White House provided no leadership, no policy, and no focus. The president did not address the deep divide between the military and civilians concerning the use of force." Herspring, *The Pentagon and the Presidency*, 367.

<sup>4</sup> Peter D. Feaver, *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 214.

<sup>5</sup> Herspring, *The Pentagon and the Presidency*, 332.

<sup>6</sup> After video of deceased and disfigured American military personnel drug behind vehicles in Mogadishu was sent around the world, Clinton referred to his Somalia foes as "two-bit pricks" and questioned how such bad publicity could have happened to him. David Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace* (New York, NY: Scribner, 2001), 262.

<sup>7</sup> Karen DeYoung, *Soldier: The Life of Colin Powell* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 239.

less than one year later despite massive carnage carried out against the Tutsis.<sup>8</sup> According to William Cohen, “there was no way to overestimate the damage Somalia had done to the Clinton administration.”<sup>9</sup> Regardless of their desire to expand the role of the military, Somalia helped prevent a complete detachment from the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine.<sup>10</sup>

Unable to purge completely Powell’s restrictive criteria, the administration employed several tools to navigate around its requirements. Under the banners of coercive diplomacy and Operations Other Than War (OOTW), they applied military force in crises lacking a direct link to United States national interests.<sup>11</sup> Buley describes how the administration viewed the Powell Doctrine as reactionary, whereas they wanted to proactively use force to manage risk and shape the environment.<sup>12</sup> Bacevich suggests how the Department of Defense morphed into the “Department of Power Projection.”<sup>13</sup> Citing the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan in the 1990s, “Clinton and many of the people around him believed that nation building was a necessary evil.”<sup>14</sup> Further, by using force in a manner that avoided American casualties, the administration also averted another

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<sup>8</sup> Writer Philip Gourevitch describes the conflict in Rwanda as the most “pure and unambiguous genocide since the end of World War II.” Quoted in Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 273.

<sup>9</sup> Secretary of defense William Cohen described Somalia as “the indelible stain” on the Clinton administration. Quoted in Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 442.

<sup>10</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 265. In contrast to the Powell Doctrine’s restrictions on the use of force, many senior Clinton administration officials believed “that the United States had an obligation to help build a multinational community by providing military forces when necessary.” Herspring, *The Pentagon and the Presidency*, 338. Nevertheless, Cimbala describes how failure in Somalia led to constraints on using forces for peacekeeping. Cimbala, “Conclusions,” 170. Cimbala further underscores the administration-developed decision-matrix for engaging in peacekeeping. Rooted in the logic of criteria similar to the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine, the matrix was an attempt to bridge the gap between the reality of Somalia and the interventionist intentions of the administration. Stephen J. Cimbala, “Clinton and U.S. Peacekeeping,” in *Clinton and Post-Cold War Defense* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), 160-163.

<sup>11</sup> Benjamin Buley, *The New American Way of War: Military Culture and the Political Utility of Force* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008), 80. Sarkesian also warned against the administration’s disassociation of military force with national interests in 1996. Sam C. Sarkesian, “Special Operations, Low-Intensity Conflict (Unconventional Conflicts), and the Clinton Defense Strategy,” in *Clinton and Post-Cold War Defense*, ed. Stephen J. Cimbala (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), 112. Corum and Johnson claim, “[Military OOTW] proved useful to the Clinton administration as it deployed U.S. forces around the globe and yet denied that such operations had anything to do with war. Jason S. Corum and Wray R. Johnson, *Airpower in Small Wars: Fighting Insurgents and Terrorists* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2003).

<sup>12</sup> Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 82-83.

<sup>13</sup> Andrew J. Bacevich, *American Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 127.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Christopher O’Sullivan, *Colin Powell: American Power and Intervention from Vietnam to Iraq* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009), 120.

requirement of the previous doctrine: garnering American popular support.<sup>15</sup> Discussing his contention that the administration pursued a policy of “Immaculate Destruction,” Buley suggests Clinton’s request for casualty figures in recent military operations before Haiti implied “the cruelty of war can not only be refined but precisely calibrated.”<sup>16</sup> The administration viewed military force as simply another tool that could be controlled, measured, and tempered to achieve political objectives. In an age where America’s power emerged without equal, this perspective resulted in a cavalier attitude toward force application that considered the enemy’s actions largely irrelevant.

Despite widespread disdain in the military for loosening the shackles of military force application, the potential for significant force reductions caused senior military leaders to consider ways to maintain relevance in a new era. Historically, the American military has experienced a significant drawdown after completing a major conflict. Based on this precedent, the military should have expected significant reductions in end strength, funding and acquisitions after the Cold War. Yet the entrenched military-industrial complex, combined with the leadership of officers determined not to relive the hollow force of the post-Vietnam era, actively pursued justification for continued military expenditures.

The military that only a decade ago sought to stay one step ahead or co-equal with the force of its arch-rival now advocated for a national defense establishment supreme in every regard when compared to any other.<sup>17</sup> Bacevich suggests the political power of the military in the 1990s should not be underestimated.<sup>18</sup> Because of the political influence of the military and the desire of the administration to redefine its role as an instrument of

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<sup>15</sup> Feaver and Kohn conclude that in the post-Cold War era, “for the first time in American history, mobilization of the citizenry en masse and of American industry is not central to national defense.” Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn, “Conclusion: The Gap and What it Means for American National Security,” in *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 468. The tragedy in Somalia caused the administration to avoid putting American forces in harm’s way.

<sup>16</sup> Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 88.

<sup>17</sup> According to Bacevich, “the services have come to view outright supremacy as merely adequate and any hesitation in efforts to increase the margin of supremacy as evidence of falling behind.” Further, he claims “self-restraint regarding the use of force has all but disappeared.” Andrew J. Bacevich, *The New American Militarism: How Americans are Seduced by War* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), 18.

<sup>18</sup> According to Bacevich, the 1990s “military functioned as an independent and powerful policy advocate that civilian officials ignored at their own peril.” Bacevich, *American Empire*, 171.

power, civil-military relations entered a new era of friction and competition.<sup>19</sup> In this environment, Clinton found a replacement for Powell who was respected by other senior military leaders and yet amenable to expanding the role of the military.

### A New Chairman: John Shalikashvili

After chafing against Powell's stonewalling regarding military solutions to the crisis in the Balkans, the administration sought a replacement more willing to flexibly employ the military in accordance with its foreign policy objectives. With close family ties to Europe and multiple experiences using his military position to assist the weak, John Shalikashvili replaced Colin Powell to become the thirteenth chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Shalikashvili immigrated to the United States as the child of a Russian father and a Polish mother. His first experience assisting a host nation's armed forces during conflict came during his time as an advisor to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. Nearly two decades later, he gained his reputation for strong, competent leadership while averting a humanitarian catastrophe. Shalikashvili relocated hundreds of thousands of Kurdish refugees to their villages in the face of hostility from the Iraqi military during Operation Provide Comfort at the end of Desert Storm.<sup>20</sup>

Although Powell had championed his successor, their respective relationships with the Clinton administration could hardly have been more different. Madeleine Albright described Shalikashvili as a "breath of fresh air" for the administration and as someone who, in contrast to his predecessor, listened to the administration's opinions and perspectives.<sup>21</sup> Although some in the military resented the strong leadership of Colin Powell that had marginalized the power of the service chiefs, few openly critiqued his views on the military's role. In comparison, Shalikashvili's views contrasted sharply with the army leadership's.<sup>22</sup>

Not the Pentagon's first choice for chairman, Shalikashvili worked to find a middle ground between the administration's desire for a flexible foreign policy tool and the Pentagon's resistance to deviation from the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine. So

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<sup>19</sup> Bacevich, *American Empire*, 172.

<sup>20</sup> The preceding paragraph was written based on information presented in: Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 319-322.

<sup>21</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 325.

<sup>22</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 391.

convinced were senior military leaders of his affiliation with the Clinton administration, they debated which of the two wanted United States intervention more.<sup>23</sup> With their interests aligned, some insiders credited him with considerable influence over European security policy.<sup>24</sup> As evidence of the difficulty he had distinguishing between his role as policy maker and policy advisor, Shalikashvili described how the “lines get blurred” between the two.<sup>25</sup>

### The Military’s Views on Use of Force

For Shalikashvili and the administration, policy regarding the use of force meant circumventing the restrictive Weinberger-Powell Doctrine.<sup>26</sup> The new chairman believed the United States military’s responsibilities went beyond such a narrow notion of the military’s role. Desiring a more flexible use of force doctrine, Shalikashvili suggested the military cannot hang a sign on the door saying “I’m sorry—we only do the big ones.”<sup>27</sup> According to Morton Abramowitz, American ambassador to Turkey from 1989-1991, Shalikashvili had “something unusual, a sensitivity to refugee problems you did not normally expect to find in military men, a genuinely profound humanitarian streak.”<sup>28</sup> As chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he cried at a holocaust memorial in Jerusalem because it reminded him of the atrocities he had witnessed in Warsaw’s Jewish ghettos as a child.<sup>29</sup> According to Halberstam, “he was to show great sympathy when dealing with refugee problems and an acute awareness of the broad new role that the American military might play in refugee situations.”<sup>30</sup> With his sensitivity to international humanitarian problems, particularly those in Eastern Europe, Shalikashvili became the senior military advisor to an administration with similar concerns. As evidence of his support for the administration, the chairman advocated for nation building in Haiti as a

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<sup>23</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 389.

<sup>24</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 390.

<sup>25</sup> Peter J. Roman and David W. Tarr, “Military Professionalism and Policymaking,” *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security*, ed. Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 421. Madeleine Albright was perhaps the administration’s most enthusiastic advocate of coercive diplomacy. Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 80.

<sup>26</sup> Halberstam specifically cites Shalikashvili’s desire to modify the Weinberger Doctrine by deleting the word vital. Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, 350.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 390-91.

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 322.

<sup>29</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 319.

<sup>30</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 323.

means to garner a success for a troubled Clinton presidency and “move away from negative to more positive foreign policy and military images.”<sup>31</sup> Not everyone in the military was as supportive.

The administration’s attempt to broaden the aperture of force application met significant resistance. During congressional testimony in 1993, Harry Summers questioned the administration’s intention to change the purpose of the military, concluding it represented a “wrongheaded notion that political, social and economic institutions can be built with the sword.”<sup>32</sup> Reflecting growing frustration with the lack of presidential leadership regarding foreign policy, Cimbala concludes “The United States remains ill disposed and ill prepared to respond to unconventional conflicts... There is a serious need, therefore, to clarify the meaning of U.S. national interests with respect to Third World instability, rethink strategic orientation, and reconsider the utilization of the U.S. military. In many instances, it may be best that the United States not become involved in OOTW or unconventional conflicts, lest U.S. involvement change the dynamics of the situation to the disadvantage of American interests. Moreover, given the nature of the U.S. domestic setting, the Weinberger Doctrine may be the best guide to the commitment of U.S. forces.”<sup>33</sup> While no one disputed the dawn of a new security environment in the absence of the former Soviet Union, the president’s lack of direction and the absence of Colin Powell’s influence created a chaotic milieu of conflicting ideas regarding the appropriate use of force in a new era.

### **Military Budget Threats**

While resisting a new use of force doctrine, the services also struggled to justify their role in national security while coping with increasingly limited resources. Beyond the cuts associated with the Base Force, Clinton’s Bottom-Up Review resulted in the additional reductions of two army divisions, more than three fighter wings, one carrier, a

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<sup>31</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 279.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Col Harry Summers, “U.S. Participation in U.N. Peacekeeping Operations,” *Perspectives on Policy and Strategy*, ed. Patrick M. Cronin, *Strategic Review*, no. 4 (Fall 1993), 71.

<sup>33</sup> Sarkesian, “Special Operations,” 118.

naval air wing, 84 surface ships, and an additional 160,000 active duty personnel.<sup>34</sup> In the face of these massive cuts, and the potential for more in the future, the military attempted to stem the tide by increasingly agreeing to do more with less. According to Bacevich, “Powell’s...successors found [innovative thinking about the proper relationship between diplomacy and military power] increasingly congenial to the Pentagon’s interests.”<sup>35</sup> Bacevich concludes the military’s proclivity to justify its existence and the administration’s desire for increased intervention loosened the shackles of American force application.<sup>36</sup> John Baker suggests the disparity between reduced resources and increased application of force resulted in a new version of the post-Vietnam era hollow force.<sup>37</sup> The intense rivalry over budget share reduced military resistance to the administration’s foreign policy by playing the services off each other instead of allowing them to present a united front of opposition. This inter-service rivalry further increased confusion about the appropriate role of the military in the post-Cold War environment.

## Haiti

Revealing their interest in solving humanitarian crises, the Clinton campaign attacked Bush’s failure to improve the conditions of Haitian refugees during the 1992 presidential election.<sup>38</sup> The Bush administration widely agreed with Powell that only non-military instruments of power should be used to put pressure on General Cedras after he deposed Haiti’s elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide.<sup>39</sup> Although convinced the United States military could easily take over the island, Powell, concerned about the lack of a clear exit strategy, cited a 1915 American intervention on the island that resulted in nineteen years of military involvement.<sup>40</sup> Powell’s resistance against the use of force in Haiti continued into the Clinton administration. Unable to overcome Powell’s obstinacy

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<sup>34</sup> These cuts were specified for Fiscal Year 1995. John C. Baker, “Clinton Defense Policy-Making and Players, Processes, and Policies,” in *Clinton and Post-Cold War Defense*, ed. Stephen J. Cimbala (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), 130.

<sup>35</sup> Bacevich, *American Empire*, 49.

<sup>36</sup> Bacevich, *American Empire*, 142. Bacevich further concludes “self-restraint regarding the use of force has all but disappeared.” Bacevich, *The New American Militarism*, 19.

<sup>37</sup> Baker, “Clinton Defense Policy-Making,” 131.

<sup>38</sup> Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 249.

<sup>39</sup> Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 249.

<sup>40</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 268.

regarding the use of force, the administration negotiated a settlement to return Aristide to power under the terms of the July 1993 Governor's Island agreement. The settlement included a provision for a United Nations contingent consisting of several hundred lightly armed American military engineers and trainers chartered with conducting nation-building projects and training the Haitian military and police.<sup>41</sup>

Just a week after the tragedy in Mogadishu, the USS *Harlan County* transported the contingent to Port-au-Prince. Instead of a welcome party, they found a hostile, armed crowd refusing to moor the ship. After moving away from the immediate threat and loitering offshore while policy makers determined the way forward, the ship eventually returned to the United States. Halberstam describes the incident as "one of the most embarrassing moments in recent American history."<sup>42</sup> Less than two weeks after Powell's departure as chairman, the American military suffered major embarrassments at the hands of third-world tyrants on two different continents while attempting to conduct missions unrelated to the vital interests of the United States.

Despite failing to participate, much less lead, during strategy discussions, Clinton lashed out at the other members of his National Security Council and his aides for not spinning the situation in a manner that maintained his popularity. Displaying exasperation, he suggested the Reagan administration had invaded Grenada as a method of sustaining the former president's popularity in the face of the attack on United States marines stationed in Lebanon. Baffled by his reaction, Clinton's staff concluded the president's judgment had been impaired by his anger.<sup>43</sup> Frustrated by the negative image bestowed on him by his administration's foreign policy failures, Clinton waited ten months before deciding to stage an invasion of the island.

Despite a military largely opposed to the use of force in Haiti, Shalikashvili broke from his predecessor's resistance and supported the mission.<sup>44</sup> Under his leadership, the military planned to use overwhelming force in the event ongoing negotiations with Cedras failed. Although Cedras' capitulation precluded the necessity of an invasion, the damage to United States credibility had already been done. The Clinton administration

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<sup>41</sup> Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 250.

<sup>42</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 271.

<sup>43</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 272-73.

<sup>44</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 279.

appeared unable to demonstrate the irrelevance of the restrictive Weinberger-Powell Doctrine in the post-Cold War era. The early experiences of Somalia and Haiti cast a long shadow over the remainder of Clinton's presidency.

## 1994 NSS

The administration published its first NSS the summer after its failures in Somalia and Haiti. Convinced that an increasingly globalized community of democratic nations enhanced the potential for political stability and peaceful conflict resolution, they titled the document *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*. The strategy was the first of its kind to contain an entire section dedicated to explaining when and how to employ American military forces. While structurally similar to Powell's criteria, the section includes comments reflecting a desire to use military force for nation-building purposes.<sup>45</sup> The document further reveals the administration's belief that earlier intervention in Bosnia would have prevented the ongoing crisis there.<sup>46</sup> Despite early foreign policy setbacks and the lingering notion that the primary purpose of the American military is to fight and win America's wars, the administration's first NSS opened the door for future uses of force only loosely tied to America's national interests.

## Bosnia

Beyond Somalia and Haiti, the Clinton administration also inherited a messy situation in Bosnia. In a power vacuum created by the breakup of the Soviet Union, the Serbs took up arms to ethnically cleanse the region of Muslims. Under the leadership of Slobodan Milosevic, the Serbs swept the region village by village, separating Muslim men from their women and children, and committing atrocities unseen in Europe since

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<sup>45</sup> The administration seems to have appreciated the usefulness of Powell's litmus test for employing force but was unsatisfied with its contents. Their policy states the military should be used selectively in instances where national interests not deemed vital to national security are concerned. Potentially influenced by the continuous stream of Haitian refugees seeking respite in the United States, the selective use of force here includes situations "where there is a potential to generate substantial refugee flows into our nation." Later, the strategy reduces the use of force to a question of economics by suggesting the United States "should be more inclined to act where there is reason to believe that our action will bring lasting improvement." The notion of lasting improvement in another nation derived from using American armed forces represents a significant departure from the deterrence doctrine in place during the Cold War. The White House, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* (Washington, DC: Office of the President, July 1994), 10.

<sup>46</sup> The White House, *A National Security Strategy* (July 1994), 21.

Nazi Germany.<sup>47</sup> Far more concerned about the status of Russia than with stopping the efforts of their Serb friends, the Bush administration refused to consider the use of military force. They turned a blind eye to reports of human atrocities in an attempt to avoid the necessity of developing a policy.<sup>48</sup>

One of many senior advisors to the president advocating against the use of force in Bosnia, Powell voiced concerns about the lack of domestic support for military involvement and the unlikelihood of success using a limited application of force.<sup>49</sup> After choosing to make his sentiments known to the public in a *New York Times* article, Powell received significant criticism from analysts suggesting he had used his uniform to shape the policy debate in a way that represented a departure from the traditional interpretation of civilian control of the military. While other analysts suggest Powell's position was consistent with that of the administration, Feaver believes Powell's behavior regarding Bosnia policy did not conform to traditional notions of civilian control of the military.<sup>50</sup> Further supporting Feaver's assertion, Warren Zimmerman, the last American ambassador to Yugoslavia, suggested that instead of actually saying no, military leaders influenced policy by providing estimates for the use of force that the administration would find impossible to support.<sup>51</sup> Feaver believes Powell was so adamant about not using force in Bosnia that he agreed to use force in Somalia and Haiti because he believed doing so decreased the likelihood of intervening in the Balkans.<sup>52</sup>

Despite Powell's best efforts at preventing military intervention, Bush eventually decided to implement a no-fly zone in Bosnia in October 1992.<sup>53</sup> Three months later, the Clinton administration came into office desiring to stop the violence using the military. Similar to what had happened in Haiti, they quickly retreated from their campaign rhetoric in the face of resistance from Powell, choosing instead to continue the policy of the previous administration.<sup>54</sup> Stymied by their lack of success in Somalia and Haiti, the

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<sup>47</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 93, 133-35, 296-97. See also Herspring, *The Pentagon and the Presidency*, 355.

<sup>48</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 128-35.

<sup>49</sup> Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 259.

<sup>50</sup> Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 260-62.

<sup>51</sup> Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 263.

<sup>52</sup> Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 241, 253-54.

<sup>53</sup> Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 261.

<sup>54</sup> Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 263.

administration lacked the confidence required to override military hesitancy to use force in Bosnia. Highlighted in a live interview with the president conducted by a reporter on the ground in Sarajevo, the administration's inability to determine a coherent, effective policy was demonstrated to the entire world.<sup>55</sup>

## 1995 NSS

After the Republicans regained a majority position in Congress, Halberstam describes the administration's arrival at an absolute low point in 1995.<sup>56</sup> Their continued search for an answer to Serb aggression was reflected in the words of their second NSS. Having noted that the NSS merely reflects American interests and values in 1994, Clinton expanded the aperture of force application in the 1995 document when he stated that the military could also be used when American values were at stake.<sup>57</sup> The document also suggested forces could be sent in support of diplomacy and to shape the character of the world.<sup>58</sup> The 1995 NSS also added humanitarian responses to the section dedicated to explaining when and how forces would be employed.<sup>59</sup> Finally, continuing with the precedent established in the previous document, the 1995 NSS claimed the Clinton administration had the ability to balance the interests involved against the costs of the operation.<sup>60</sup> Such a bold statement reflects little concern for the paradox of strategy that acknowledges consequences resulting from the unpredictable actions of a determined enemy. Instead, the notion reveals the insecurity of an administration struggling to gain control over foreign policy events continuing to damage its reputation.

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<sup>55</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 283.

<sup>56</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 298-300.

<sup>57</sup> The White House, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* (Washington, DC: Office of the President, February 1995), ii.

<sup>58</sup> The White House, *A National Security Strategy* (February 1995), 12-13.

<sup>59</sup> The White House, *A National Security Strategy* (February 1995), 12.

<sup>60</sup> The White House, *A National Security Strategy* (February 1995), 13. Richard Betts suggests this determination is impossible because "military strategy does not operate with a single currency of exchange to make goods and prices clear to all parties of a bargain. Unconscious emotions and unclear motives, cognitive problems, and cultural biases prevent strategy from integrating means and ends." Richard K. Betts, "Is Strategy an Illusion," *International Security* 25, no. 2 (Fall 2000): 22.

## **1995 NMS**

As if to show solidarity with the White House, Shalikashvili released the first update to Powell's inaugural military strategy document the same month the administration published its NSS. Labeled "a strategy of flexible and selective engagement," the document also revealed a significant departure from Powell's perspective on the use of force. The chairman's cover letter reveals the underlying assumption of the document when it states, "the challenge of the new strategic era is to selectively use the vast and unique capabilities of the Armed Forces to advance national interests in peacetime while maintaining readiness to fight and win when called upon."<sup>61</sup> In contrast to the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine's concentration on vital national interests, the 1995 NMS revealed the chairman's perspective that force could be used as a means to shape the international environment.<sup>62</sup> Instead of insisting on overwhelming force and clear objectives, the new strategy called for "necessary power" and "sufficient forces" while describing their occasional use for operations in a "gray zone between peace and war."<sup>63</sup> Finally, hinting at a future requirement to use military forces for nation-building activities, the strategy highlighted the importance of developing new tasks and capabilities useful for assisting nations during the "transition period following war."<sup>64</sup> Shalikashvili's 1995 NMS represents a significant departure from Powell's in 1992. Instead of acting to restrain civilians who felt compelled to use force when faced with a foreign policy predicament, Shalikashvili's strategy actively supported the inclination.

## **NATO Acts**

Along with the newly published strategy documents revealing the desire for more flexibility in the use of military force, the summer of 1995 included numerous developments leading to a significant revision of the administration's policy in Bosnia. The first development was the increasing capabilities of military opposition forces on the ground. In July, the American-trained Croat military joined forces with the Bosnian

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<sup>61</sup> Department of Defense, *National Military Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1995).

<sup>62</sup> Department of Defense, *National Military Strategy* (1995), i.

<sup>63</sup> Department of Defense, *National Military Strategy* (1995), ii, 12.

<sup>64</sup> Department of Defense, *National Military Strategy* (1995), 9, 16.

Muslim military to stage an offensive against the Serbs.<sup>65</sup> Second, the Serbs incensed the West with atrocities they committed during their takeover of Srebrenica. Their ethnic cleansing resulted in thousands murdered and brutal crimes committed against women and children.<sup>66</sup> Finally, Jacques Chirac, the recently elected president of France, broke from his predecessor's lack of interest in Bosnia. Chirac turned up the heat on the Clinton administration by suggesting the current policy was worse than a complete withdrawal.<sup>67</sup>

Pressured by Chirac and growing domestic concerns about the administration's impotence in the face of internationally televised horrors taking place in Bosnia, Clinton demanded a new policy. Internally, a number of influential Americans from different political backgrounds believed the administration had a responsibility to take action in the region.<sup>68</sup> The pressure escalated to the point where Clinton believed his political future and America's position of strength in the world hung in the balance.<sup>69</sup> Al Gore, long considered a hawk, summed up the rationale behind increasing American involvement in Bosnia during a meeting of the principals two days after Srebrenica fell. Gore explained that the United States had a moral obligation to stop the violence.<sup>70</sup> "At the end of the meeting Clinton was talking openly about using American airpower," and suggesting the United States "can not be a punching bag in the world anymore."<sup>71</sup> Chirac's influence combined with domestic pressure and the moral judgment of Clinton's cabinet to convince him of the need for force in Bosnia.

Like Clinton, Shalikashvili's interest in Bosnia grew over time. Despite his sensitivity to humanitarian causes, he was initially "as apprehensive as Powell about deepening America's involvement."<sup>72</sup> Nevertheless, Clinton's support of action in Bosnia, and his own outrage over Serb atrocities in Srebrenica, persuaded Shalikashvili

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<sup>65</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 332-38.

<sup>66</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 314-16.

<sup>67</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 316.

<sup>68</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 306-07.

<sup>69</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 313-17.

<sup>70</sup> After his daughter's distress over seeing a picture of a Muslim girl her same age who had committed suicide, Gore claimed he could not explain to her in good faith a lack of action by the United States. Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 330-31.

<sup>71</sup> Quoted in Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 331.

<sup>72</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 325.

that the use of force was required.<sup>73</sup> Halberstam describes how numerous civilians who worked for the Clinton administration and its predecessor viewed the “appointment of Shalikashvili as an important step in the slow turning around of the existing policy.”<sup>74</sup> Previously convinced airpower used alone was little more than foreign policy on the cheap and that it offered little hope of success in such a complex environment, he began to lobby his National Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) counterparts for their support of a massive bombing attack.<sup>75</sup> Shalikashvili’s change of perspective caused his counterparts in the Pentagon to believe “the civilians had gotten to [him].”<sup>76</sup>

While the Clinton administration was rallying support for a NATO aerial offensive in Bosnia, the tide was already turning against the Serbs. Under the umbrella of the state department, Clinton had earlier authorized the training of the Croat army by “retired but highly talented American officers and NCOs” who now operated in the private sector.<sup>77</sup> Allowed to strike at the beginning of August, these American-trained and supplied forces began to take back territory lost to Serb offensives as allied support for a massive bombing attack solidified.<sup>78</sup> Despite the revenge these forces wrought on their adversaries’ military forces and its civilian population, their progress added legitimacy to the redrawing of borders specified in the Endgame Strategy now espoused by the Clinton administration.<sup>79</sup>

After a “brutal and senseless attack on Sarajevo” by the Serbs that resulted in the deaths of thirty-eight people in the city’s marketplace, the hair trigger of the NATO alliance yielded under the pressure. “On 30 August 1995, NATO began the heaviest bombing in its history, using its most modern weapons.”<sup>80</sup> Two weeks later, the Serbs agreed to stop their offensive. According to Herspring, this time period represented “the first time the president considered tying [the air campaign with the diplomatic effort]” despite a growing chasm between the senior civilians and military leaders.<sup>81</sup> Instead of

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<sup>73</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 326.

<sup>74</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 324.

<sup>75</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 326-27.

<sup>76</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 326.

<sup>77</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 332.

<sup>78</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 339.

<sup>79</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 312-14.

<sup>80</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 348.

<sup>81</sup> Herspring, *The Pentagon and the Presidency*, 358-59.

approving recommendations with ambivalence, the president showed signs of directing the foreign policy effort.

The Dayton Peace Accords, signed in the United States in November 1995, effectively ended more than three years of violence in Bosnia by sanctioning the ethnic division of the territory between two states: a Croat-Bosnian Federation and a Bosnian Serb republic.<sup>82</sup> The delicate agreement required the United States to send 20,000 peacekeepers to the region. Aware of the domestic unpopularity of sending American troops to Bosnia, Clinton arbitrarily implemented a time limit of twelve months on the commitment in an effort to protect his reelection bid the following year.<sup>83</sup> Although viewed as a foreign policy success, the Dayton agreement did not prevent future conflict in the region.

### A Peaceful Interlude

#### 1996 and 1997 NSS

Sustaining the momentum gained by its success in Bosnia, the administration's 1996 NSS altered little beyond the provisions of its predecessor regarding the use of force. The most extensive alteration of the strategy involved the American response to terrorism. The 1996 document included the statement that "from time to time we might also find it necessary to strike terrorists at their bases abroad or to attack assets valued by the governments that support them." Listing multiple terrorist attacks since 1993, the document also singled out Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism.<sup>84</sup>

The 1997 NSS, titled *A National Security Strategy for a New Century*, claimed a requirement to lead an "international response to shared challenges" due to the reluctance of other nations to act forcefully without the United States.<sup>85</sup> The strategy added a new section entitled "Smaller-Scale Contingencies," in which it detailed the intent to use military forces in a "limited manner to underline the message and deter future adventurism." Suggesting these smaller contingencies were the "most frequent challenge

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<sup>82</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 358.

<sup>83</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 358-59.

<sup>84</sup> The White House, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* (Washington, DC: Office of the President, February 1996), 15-16.

<sup>85</sup> The White House, *A National Security Strategy for a New Century* (Washington, DC: Office of the President, May 1997), 1.

for U.S. forces,” the administration emphasized the necessity of military capabilities across a “full range of military operations short of major theater warfare.”<sup>86</sup>

## 1997 NMS

Published after the 1997 NSS, Shalikashvili’s final NMS further detached the military’s use of force doctrine from the views of his predecessor. The chairman more explicitly described his views on the use of force by claiming the military could produce peace and stability by shaping the international environment.<sup>87</sup> Shalikashvili pandered to his military audience by using the term decisive on multiple occasions throughout the document. His use of the term, however, differed greatly from Powell’s commitment to overwhelming force employed against an enemy’s military. Shalikashvili’s strategy described decisive force as force sufficient to, among other things, “achieve a political resolution favorable to US national interests.”<sup>88</sup> This statement appears contradictory when compared to a later pronouncement that “the military by itself can rarely address the root causes of conflict.”<sup>89</sup> The strategy’s multiple explanations of the term decisive leave the reader with a diluted idea of the word robbed of its commonly understood meaning in the military as an indisputable defeat of a military force on the field of battle.<sup>90</sup>

Further exploring the notion of using the military as a political tool outside the realm of military engagements, the 1997 NMS claims the military can use decisive force in instances not involving armed resistance “to accomplish the full scope of their military tasks.”<sup>91</sup> According to the strategy, force may be used to protect interests “that do not affect our national survival but do affect our national well-being and the character of the

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<sup>86</sup> The White House, *A National Security Strategy* (May 1997), 11-12.

<sup>87</sup> Department of Defense, *National Military Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1997), chairman’s cover letter.

<sup>88</sup> Department of Defense, *National Military Strategy* (1997), 3.

<sup>89</sup> Department of Defense, *National Military Strategy* (1997), 13.

<sup>90</sup> Describing the term decisive, Colin Gray cites the Roman difficulty in linking tactical success with strategic success at Cannae to conclude, “decisive victories come in many guises and sometimes mislead the winner.” He further illustrates how “decisive victory may well elude us, notwithstanding our apparent military excellence, if the army is too small, if it is assigned missions for which it is ill-fitted, or if politicians insist upon shaping military operations according to extra-military criteria.” Colin S. Gray, *Defining and Achieving Decisive Victory* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, April 2002), 19, 22.

<sup>91</sup> Department of Defense, *National Military Strategy* (1997), 20.

world in which we live.”<sup>92</sup> Including a section on smaller-scale contingency operations derived from its parent document, the 1997 NMS articulated a vision of the future replete with uses of limited force spanning the spectrum of conflict. The stated objective became “full spectrum dominance.”<sup>93</sup> Shalikashvili’s second NMS attempted to bridge the gap between conservative military officers desiring to retain their identity as war-fighters and an administration seeking greater flexibility in its use of the military. Instead of finding a middle ground, it increased the Pentagon’s concerns about future roles and missions.

### A New Chairman: Henry Shelton

Months after the release of the 1997 NMS, Henry “Hugh” Shelton replaced Shalikashvili to become the fourteenth chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Described by some analysts as “the most unusual choice in a generation for the job of chief military adviser to the president,” Shelton’s background in the Special Forces distanced him somewhat from the direct influence of the individual service chiefs. The same pundits further described his lack of a global view and propensity to stick to strictly military advice without delving into politics.<sup>94</sup> Similar to his predecessor, Shelton did not possess anything resembling the political intuition of Colin Powell.<sup>95</sup> Skeptical of over-emphasizing peacekeeping to the point of diminishing war-fighting capabilities, Shelton nevertheless agreed with Shalikashvili that the military must accept more flexibility in missions with political objectives short of major theater warfare.

Speaking at the National Press Club near the end of his tenure as chairman, Shelton acknowledged the requirement to use force for limited objectives but remained concerned about the effects of such use on the long-term health of the military. In the same presentation, he suggested the nature of military conflict had become more complex and predicted greater diversity in types of future conflicts. Based on this assessment, he determined the American military must have the ability to dominate opponents in every

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<sup>92</sup> Department of Defense, *National Military Strategy* (1997), 6.

<sup>93</sup> Department of Defense, *National Military Strategy* (1997), 17.

<sup>94</sup> Elaine Sciolino and Steven Lee Myers, “Military Chief Hits the Ground Learning,” *The New York Times*, late ed., 5 December 1997. Similarly, Halberstam describes Shelton as a man of his institution who did not possess a political mind. Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 414-15. Herspring also discusses Shelton’s dissimilarity with Colin Powell by stressing the fact that he was not the type to recommend policy. Herspring, *The Pentagon and the Presidency*, 362.

<sup>95</sup> Bacevich, *American Empire*, 174.

kind of conflict and at the same time. Despite his proclivity to suggest a flexible response capability across the spectrum of threats, Shelton also described his belief that force should be used only as a last resort, and that its use did not guarantee an effective solution to every problem.<sup>96</sup> Instead of advocating for global intervention, Shelton took a more pragmatic approach. Interested in minimizing risks, Shelton lobbied for the resources to meet the increasing demands of civilian leaders.

## 1998 NSS

With a pliable, if not sympathetic, new chairman appointed, the Clinton administration once again avoided the potential for military obstinacy in the face of their desire to increasingly levy military force against troubling situations across the globe. Beyond previous explanations of full spectrum dominance that included smaller-scale contingencies and humanitarian operations, the 1998 NSS expanded the threat envelope to include failed states. Additionally, the emphasis on values-based intervention continued to increase in this version of the administration's strategy.<sup>97</sup> Once again focusing on the threat from terrorist organizations, the Clinton administration mentioned Osama bin Laden by name and described its intent to respond to terrorist attacks using military force in order to "ensure that justice is done." The strategy described previous uses of force against terrorist bases in Afghanistan and Sudan.<sup>98</sup> Having used the military to reinstall a government in Haiti, stop genocide in Bosnia, and punish terrorists on two different continents, the administration's strategy continued to expand the Pentagon's purview.

## Kosovo

Slobodan Milosevic was not intimidated by the administration's history of military intervention as the Serbs continued to instigate violence in the Balkans. Nevertheless, America's senior officer in the region changed in 1997 when Wes Clark, a

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<sup>96</sup> Gen Henry Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (address, National Press Club, Washington, DC, 14 December 2000).

<sup>97</sup> As opposed to limiting uses of force to those instances where America's interests are threatened, the administration asserted, "in some circumstances our nation may act because our values demand it." The White House, *A National Security Strategy for a New Century* (Washington, DC: Office of the President, October 1998), 5.

<sup>98</sup> The White House, *A National Security Strategy* (October 1998), 12, 16.

catalyst effecting Milosevic's eventual demise, was appointed as the Supreme Allied Commander of Europe (SACEUR). Similar to the way the Clinton administration sought out Shalikashvili for chairman despite the fact that senior military leaders recommended others, Shalikashvili sought out Wes Clark as a four-star general, and eventually as SACEUR, in the face of extensive opposition from the army.<sup>99</sup> Arguably the most political senior military leader since Powell, Clark quickly became an advocate of threatening the use of force in Kosovo because he believed it was the only way to stop Milosevic from allowing Serb atrocities.<sup>100</sup> Serving as both SACEUR and a war-fighting combatant commander (CINC), Clark wielded significant authority in a position coveted by the army's best officers.<sup>101</sup>

Clark's desire for the use of force in Kosovo found a sympathetic ear with Madeleine Albright, the administration's secretary of state. Despite opposition from the Pentagon and the distraction of Clinton's recent impeachment trial, Albright pushed for action in the Balkans as early as January 1999. Similar to the way Serb atrocities at Srebrenica had motivated a NATO response in Bosnia, another mass killing of civilians in the village of Racak solidified support for military operations from an otherwise unwilling alliance.<sup>102</sup>

Kosovo represented the apex of two important trends in civil-military relations and the use of force. First, the administration's hubris about their ability to control the outcome and consequences of armed conflict was clearly evident. Convinced the requirement for force would be short-lived, as it had been in Bosnia, the White House predicted, and the military prepared for, a short war of only a few days.<sup>103</sup> In a remarkably bold statement on the night NATO's air campaign began, Clinton stated "I do not intend to put our troops in Kosovo to fight a war."<sup>104</sup> Consumed by the political requirement to appease an unsupportive Congress, Clinton's political mind apparently did not grasp the military reality that such a statement granted his enemy significant breathing room. Furthermore, constrained by resistant allies, Clinton agreed to constrain

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<sup>99</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 391-93.

<sup>100</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 396.

<sup>101</sup> The army considered SACEUR "the prince of Europe—the most powerful man on the continent." Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 392-93.

<sup>102</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 409-10.

<sup>103</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 425.

<sup>104</sup> Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 275.

the target list and rules of engagement severely to preclude significant collateral damage and to reduce the risk of any downed NATO pilots.<sup>105</sup> Discussing Clinton's antiseptic use of force, Bacevich concluded the president had "stumbled onto a formula enabling the United States to fight wars without engaging the passions of the American people."<sup>106</sup> In the event, the numerous political conciliations the administration made to start the operation resulted in an ineffectively waged effort that drug on for nearly three months and failed to stem the tide of Serb atrocities throughout its conduct.

The second Clinton administration trend brought to a zenith in Kosovo was the military's opposition to its civilian leadership under Clinton. Halberstam describes the state of civil-military relations in the late 1990s as distrustful. He highlights the military's complaint that the White House was more concerned with political spin than with the welfare of the war-fighters and the civilians' complaint that the military was too cautious and political.<sup>107</sup> The military resisted Clark's requests for support of operations in Kosovo. Instead of active service chiefs and a chairman seeking ways to increase the likelihood of victory, the senior military leaders resisted the possibility for American casualties in a war they deemed unworthy of American lives. Despite Clark's continual lobbying for more tools with which to prosecute his attack, senior leaders in the Pentagon applied the brakes to the operation in numerous ways.<sup>108</sup> Unlike Desert Storm, where Powell had served as an effective advocate who helped Schwarzkopf get the resources he needed for success, Shelton's predictable ambivalence only exacerbated the already wide chasm between the CINC and both his civilian masters and military comrades in Washington, DC.<sup>109</sup> After presiding over an eventual NATO victory in Kosovo, Clark's subsequent early removal from his SACEUR post revealed the severity of the fractured civil-military relationship.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 276.

<sup>106</sup> Bacevich, *American Empire*, 192.

<sup>107</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 415-19.

<sup>108</sup> Perhaps the most telling example is the reluctance of the army to send AH-64 Apache helicopters after Clark requested them. Despite Clark's contention that the helicopters would help win the conflict, the army viewed their deployment as the beginning of an increasingly larger ground presence. In the end, the army got their way and the helicopters did not see action in Kosovo. Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 422, 463-67.

<sup>109</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 436-37.

<sup>110</sup> Herspring describes the senior military leader perspective that Clinton "was the antithesis of the kind of political leader and commander in chief that the military sought. They were happy to see him leave office." Herspring, *The Pentagon and the Presidency*, 376. From the beginning the military viewed Clark as an

## The Close of a Century

### 1999 and 2000 NSS

Several months after the end of NATO's bombing offensive, the Clinton administration published its 1999 NSS. Regarding the use of force, the most significant distinction in this document focused on the kinds of force used for military operations. The strategy suggested decisive force should be used in pursuit of vital national interests while limited and selective force should be used when pursuing national interests not deemed vital.<sup>111</sup> Although the distinction largely reflected the administration's increasing use of limited force to pursue limited ends, Robert DiPrizio argues that using the term national interests to predict when force will be used offers little value.<sup>112</sup> The president's personal preface to his annual security strategy policies implies a similar conclusion. He repeatedly stated that globalization increasingly blurs the line between domestic and foreign policy. Based on his own statement, America's national interests and values were increasingly those of the world. Given the diverse nature of the world population, attempting to objectively determine its aggregate interests and values appears little more than a fool's errand. The administration's desire for flexibility in using force to accomplish foreign policy based on the domestic popularity of its president trumped any notion of using force only as a last resort and in restrictive circumstances. Furthermore, such an open-ended use-of-force policy called into question whether a line existed beyond which force application does more harm than good.

In their final national security strategy document, the administration emphasized an increasing perception of world interconnectedness by changing the title to *A National Security Strategy for a Global Age*. The 2000 NSS contained the most extensive

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outsider and supporter of the administration. They were also happy to see him depart. Halberstam, *War in a Time*, 393, 478-80. In another display of his lack of concern for the military, the president failed to intervene to save the career of his war-winning CINC. Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 281.

<sup>111</sup> The White House, *A National Security Strategy for a New Century* (Washington, DC: Office of the President, December 1999), 20.

<sup>112</sup> DiPrizio states, "One cannot explain past interventions or predict future ones based primarily on the calculations of national interest. Second, interpretation plays a large role in determining if and when soft security concerns are present and when they are important enough to trigger action. This is true, of course, for even so-called vital national interests because, as mentioned earlier, there is no universal definition of the term." Robert C. DiPrizio, *Armed Humanitarians: US Interventions from Northern Iraq to Kosovo* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 162.

discussion yet of the military's role in combating terrorism.<sup>113</sup> The strategy also leaned further toward a doctrine of preventive conflict by suggesting that resolving smaller-scale contingencies can prevent "costlier conflicts that might well threaten U.S. vital interests."<sup>114</sup> Finally, as if to sweep the last eight years of intervention under the carpet, the Clinton administration claimed that after deciding to use force, "our forces will have a clear mission and the means to achieve their objectives decisively."<sup>115</sup> Perhaps it took eight years of gaining experience in multiple conflicts for them to appreciate some of Powell's perspective.

## A New Administration

George W. Bush did not forget the way American military force was employed during the Clinton administration. During the 2000 presidential campaign, Bush criticized his predecessor for conducting "experiments in nation building" and promised to stop "open-ended deployments and unclear military missions."<sup>116</sup> Nevertheless, despite his campaign promises of greater international humility and more empathy toward the needs of the military, Bush pursued the same grand strategy as his predecessor.<sup>117</sup> Discussing four imperatives common to every administration since the fall of the Soviet Union, Bacevich lists the fourth of these imperatives as "military superiority, maintained in perpetuity and projected globally."<sup>118</sup> Despite campaign claims denouncing Clinton's irresponsible use of force in inappropriate situations, the Bush administration perpetuated warnings of a dangerous new world order replete with new threats. Accordingly, these threats demanded a military capable of dominating every potential adversary. Beyond a capable force, the American tradition of playing away

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<sup>113</sup> The White House, *A National Security Strategy for a Global Age* (Washington, DC: Office of the President, December 2000), 17.

<sup>114</sup> The White House, *A National Security Strategy* (December 2000), 27.

<sup>115</sup> The White House, *A National Security Strategy* (December 2000), 29.

<sup>116</sup> Bacevich, *American Empire*, 203, 236.

<sup>117</sup> Bacevich cites Bush's continuance of Clinton's tit-for-tat bombing with Saddam Hussein, established military presence in the Balkans, sharp criticism of Pyongyang's quest for nuclear weapons, commitment to Columbia, weakness on China policy, and strain between senior military leaders and their civilian masters as evidence that the new administration's overall security strategy differed little from that of its predecessor. Bacevich, *American Empire*, 201-12.

<sup>118</sup> Paraphrased, his first three imperatives include a dominant America as the vanguard of history, globalization guided by the United States, and American leadership in the world's most important areas. Bacevich, *American Empire*, 215-23.

games meant the military's Cold War mission of deterring conflict transitioned to a mission of projecting power in the post-Cold War world.<sup>119</sup> Similar to its recent predecessors, the Bush administration sought to expand the increasingly globalized economy by leveraging American military strength against threats to its expansion.

Although many senior military leaders welcomed the transition to the Bush presidency, eight years of strain under his predecessor revealed itself in continued poor civil-military relations. Spearheaded by Donald Rumsfeld, the Bush team sought to institute drastic military reforms in an effort to transform the military. Feaver suggests eight years of no discipline under the Clinton administration resulted in senior military leaders unwilling to carry out policy they found disagreeable.<sup>120</sup> Based on the unpopularity of Rumsfeld's transformation reforms and the state of civil-military relations after the departure of the previous administration, "the military's resistance was never as open nor as bitterly personal."<sup>121</sup> Many Pentagon civilian leaders blamed the resistance on military leaders who came to positions of authority under a weak administration. If weak civilian control lies at the root of a harmful civil-military relations fracture, Rumsfeld's apparent capitulation in the face of significant military pressure provided further cause for concern.<sup>122</sup> Unchecked by Clinton, the political influence gained by the military in the 1990s continued shaping policy at the beginning of a new century.

## **Summary**

The Clinton administration took office under difficult circumstances. Upon their arrival in the White House, they faced unsolved foreign policy crises in three different locations around the globe. Furthermore, America's unexpectedly rapid emergence as the world's lone superpower effectively removed the foundation upon which the past fifty years of national security policy had been built. Finally, the president's senior military advisor, imbued with power granted by Goldwater-Nichols and his status as a war hero, had become the most influential military figure since George Marshall. For a new

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<sup>119</sup> Bacevich, *American Empire*, 220-24.

<sup>120</sup> Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 289.

<sup>121</sup> Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 290.

<sup>122</sup> Feaver, *Armed Servants*, 290.

president with little experience in foreign policy, the enormous challenges he faced in 1993 cannot be overestimated.

As they searched for effective solutions, the administration sought to align interests and gain leverage over obstacles. Replacing Powell with Shalikashvili represented an important first step toward the implementation of a significantly revised foreign policy. The new chairman's sympathetic views regarding humanitarian missions and his willingness to provide a more flexible military response capability stood in stark contrast to the intentions of his predecessor. Still, early failures in Somalia and Haiti caused the Clinton team to struggle for eight long years trying to reconcile their intentions with the demonstrated limitations of using force.

Combined with fallout from battling the military over gay rights and defense spending, these early foreign policy failures loomed large over a president already perceived as anti-military. Contrary to Eliot Cohen's description of effective state leaders who demand performance from their militaries in time of war, Clinton's involvement was minimal.<sup>123</sup> While Shalikashvili's attempt to bridge the gap between a weak president and a resistant military was admirable, the political influence of the military, often expressed through the legislative branch, increased to fill the leadership vacuum.

Despite the opposition, the administration continued seeking influence over the military. Buoyed by a strong economy and a peaceful interlude after the signing of the Dayton agreement, the Clinton administration appointed a new chairman to replace Shalikashvili. Although not as outwardly supportive of intervention as his predecessor, Shelton's quiet demeanor and refusal to debate policy provided the administration exactly what they needed to continue their pursuit of a flexibly employed military instrument of power. Instead of resisting a more liberal use of force doctrine, Shelton lobbied for the enormous resources required to fund it. Paradoxically, the administration's interests actually aligned with the military's as service chiefs accepted a more flexible doctrine in order to pursue a larger share of the budget. As demonstrated by operations in Kosovo,

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<sup>123</sup> Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesman, and Leadership in Wartime* (New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 2002). For examples of the extent of Clinton's lack of involvement, see Herspring, *The Pentagon and the Presidency*, 333, 367.

however, a tailored and technologically superior force does not always provide the desired political results.

Despite campaign rhetoric pointing out the foreign policy failings of the Clinton administration, the Bush team pursued a nearly identical foreign policy strategy during their first year in office. When they did seek change, such as the transformation initiative, senior military leaders politicized during the turmoil of the previous administration proved to be an intransigent barrier for the strongest of civilian leaders. Regardless, the administration's continued pursuit of economic expansion and engagement made the use of force all too easy in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

## Chapter 4

### American Hegemony after 9/11

*We're never going to get people all in agreement about force and use of force. But action—confident action that will yield positive results provides kind of a slipstream into which reluctant nations and leaders can get behind and show themselves that there has been—you know, something positive has happened toward peace.*

-George W. Bush

*I would be very careful about using our troops as nation builders. I believe the role of the military is to fight and win war....I don't want to try to put our troops in all places at all times. I don't want to be the world's policeman.*

-George W. Bush

*Andy Card...was struck that Rumsfeld and the chairman tended to opine in the same voice. It was an echo, and he could not recall an instance when the chairman's advice challenged Rumsfeld's. There were a few times he found himself thinking to himself that it was significant that the chairman of the Joint Chiefs wasn't saying anything. The silence might mean the chairman disagreed but they would never know.*

-Bob Woodward  
*State of Denial: Bush at War, Part III*

The Bush team entered office with a plan for using military power. Prior to the inauguration, Donald Rumsfeld discussed his intentions for use of force with his boss. The soon-to-be secretary of defense illustrated his view that the previous administration's signature strategy following an attack had been an initial retreat followed by the use of a low-risk, standoff weapon that did not risk American lives. Rumsfeld's thoughts were in lock step with his deputy, Paul Wolfowitz, who believed the Clinton administration's use of force had the tendency to "temporize instead of going for the jugular."<sup>1</sup> In contrast,

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Andrew J. Bacevich, *The Limits of Power* (New York, NY: Metropolitan Books, 2008), 116.

Rumsfeld intended a more proactive and complete use of the military; Bush gave the impression that he agreed.<sup>2</sup>

Donald Rumsfeld took the reins of the Defense Department with an agenda. A former United States Navy pilot who had already served as the secretary of defense in the Ford administration, he understood the Pentagon bureaucracy and sought to reform it. Rumsfeld's exacting leadership style could hardly have been more different than his predecessor's. His already strong personality was reinforced by the administration he served. After announcing Rumsfeld's appointment, Bush stated that he wanted his defense secretary "to challenge the status quo inside the Pentagon."<sup>3</sup> Rumsfeld was also a Dick Cheney protégé with three decades of personal ties to the vice president.<sup>4</sup> Even his deputy reinforced his inclinations regarding the potential for American military power.<sup>5</sup> Given Bush's guidance and their familiarity with defense policy, the administration marginalized the influence of senior military leaders.<sup>6</sup>

### A New Chairman: Richard Myers

Rumsfeld's break with the former administration was perhaps most obvious to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Since the implementation of Goldwater-Nichols, chairmen had used their role as the senior military advisor to fashion themselves as a primary source of information relating to military matters. Rumsfeld believed the chairman and his staff simply added an unnecessary and inefficient layer of bureaucracy to the process. Instead of the National Military Command Center notifying the chairman

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<sup>2</sup> Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2002), 19-20.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2004), 270.

<sup>4</sup> Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 273.

<sup>5</sup> Bacevich described Paul Wolfowitz as "Nitze's offspring." Beyond Nitze's direct influence on Wolfowitz, Bacevich's description concerns both men's belief that significant national security threats warranted an extraordinary emphasis on United States military might. According to Bacevich, "for Wolfowitz, the ideology of national security served as a sort of surrogate religion. He was a true believer, harboring no doubts about history's purpose and America's assigned role in accomplishing that purpose." Bacevich, *The Limits of Power*, 115-16.

<sup>6</sup> O'Sullivan summarized the effect of this relationship when he described how few Bush administration officials had wartime experience but thought military intervention was the solution to every problem. O'Sullivan's description focused primarily on Donald Rumsfeld and Condoleezza Rice. Although Powell had wartime experience, the other two marginalized his opinions. Based on his close relationship with Rumsfeld and his cool relationship with Powell, Cheney normally supported the former and marginalized the latter. Christopher O'Sullivan, *Colin Powell: American Power and Intervention from Vietnam to Iraq* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009), 170.

of significant incidents, Rumsfeld wanted to be the first one called.<sup>7</sup> Emphasizing that he was in the chain of command, Rumsfeld further suggested Shelton should give advice to him instead of directly to the president.<sup>8</sup> He told the Joint Chiefs of Staff they were “not providing any value,” and suggested the Joint Staff was worthless.<sup>9</sup> Rumsfeld’s attempts to marginalize senior military leaders reflected the regret of Cheney and other members of the Bush administration that Powell had become such a powerful figure as the chairman in the elder Bush’s administration. Despite the campaign rhetoric highlighting differences, the Bush administration, like the Clinton administration it followed, sought freedom from the influence of a politically powerful military officer.

Unsurprisingly, the successor selected for Henry Shelton’s job was not the most outspoken among the field of candidates. Although considered by many to be the frontrunner for the position, Adm Vern Clark’s interpretation of Goldwater-Nichols and his willingness to confront Rumsfeld precluded his selection for the position.<sup>10</sup> Despite Clark’s solid interview with the president and the recommendation he received from Shelton, the administration chose the sitting vice chairman, Richard Myers.

Bush announced his decision for a new chairman 18 days before 9/11. An air force fighter pilot and Vietnam veteran with a genteel demeanor, Myers had completed a tour as the head of Space Command prior to becoming the vice chairman.<sup>11</sup> Regardless of his previous assignments or experience, Myers’ non-confrontational style worried Shelton most. His concerns were soon vindicated. Instead of offering independent advice to the president, Myers thoughts were often issued to him by the strong secretary of defense. Before going to meetings where both men were present, Rumsfeld ensured that Myers’ opinion matched his own.<sup>12</sup> Many of the chairman’s military counterparts

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<sup>7</sup> Bob Woodward, *State of Denial: Bush at War, Part III* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 24.

<sup>8</sup> Woodward, *State of Denial*, 22.

<sup>9</sup> Woodward, *State of Denial*, 38.

<sup>10</sup> Woodward discusses the Bush administration’s interview process, and Clark’s relationship with Rumsfeld at length. According to his account, Clark was Bush’s favorite as a replacement for Shelton. Additionally, Shelton believed Clark would offer independent advice to the secretary regardless of Rumsfeld’s thoughts. Although he does not state it explicitly, Woodward’s account leads the reader to the conclusion that Rumsfeld’s desire for control over the military meant he could not allow Clark to become chairman. Woodward, *State of Denial*, 53-69.

<sup>11</sup> Woodward, *State of Denial*, 70.

<sup>12</sup> Myers described meeting with the secretary to achieve a “mind meld,” wherein Myers would adapt his perspective to match Rumsfeld’s. Woodward, *State of Denial*, 72.

viewed him as Rumsfeld's senior military assistant.<sup>13</sup> So complete was Myers' frustration with his lack of influence that he was often seen with his head down on the tank conference table and overheard calling Rumsfeld "that son of a bitch," or "that asshole."<sup>14</sup> According to Woodward, "strong, forceful military advice was bleached out of the system. The uniformed military was now just staff, its voice a polite whisper."<sup>15</sup> Civil-military affairs at the end of 2001 had strayed far from the precedent established by Powell ten years earlier.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to the new administration's more dominant relationship with military leaders, they initially maintained the lean defense budgets of the Clinton years. Rumsfeld's budget requests were repeatedly refused as the administration focused its attention on tax cuts rather than expensive defense programs.<sup>17</sup> Even with the ideological similitude between Rumsfeld, Cheney, and Bush, the secretary's lack of success in funding and implementing his transformation initiative caused speculation about his replacement.<sup>18</sup> For Rumsfeld, 9/11 represented an opportunity to regroup.<sup>19</sup> For the administration, the attacks provided an opportunity to overcome political roadblocks preventing increased defense spending.

### Preparing for War

In the wake of the attacks, the American public understandably sought reprisal against its perpetrators and the organizations that supported them.<sup>20</sup> America's rage removed the one check on using force that had existed in the previous administration: the

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<sup>13</sup> Woodward, *State of Denial*, 72.

<sup>14</sup> Woodward, *State of Denial*, 74.

<sup>15</sup> Woodward, *State of Denial*, 74.

<sup>16</sup> As evidence of the change in civil-military relations, Mann cited the change in Defense Department representative chosen to interface with the media. Instead of Powell giving the briefing with Cheney standing quietly off to the side, Rumsfeld was now the one at the microphone while Myers looked on. Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 196.

<sup>17</sup> Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 290.

<sup>18</sup> The *Washington Post*'s Al Kamen reported, "the sweepstakes have already begun on who might succeed Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld if and when he steps down." Quoted in Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 291.

<sup>19</sup> The increasing media focus on defense quickly turned him into a star. Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 306.

<sup>20</sup> Although conventional wisdom and the rhetoric of post-Cold War administrations described the increasing scourge of terrorism in an otherwise peaceful world, the evidence suggests the opposite is true. International terrorism actually decreased significantly after the Cold War. Andrew J. Bacevich, *American Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 118-19.

population's unwillingness to risk military casualties.<sup>21</sup> Despite the existence of a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) plan to eradicate al Qaeda approved by the National Security Council principals only one week prior to the attacks, Bush immediately framed the problem as one for the military to solve.<sup>22</sup> Reinforced by his defense secretary's stated intentions, Bush told his vice president shortly after the attack that he was going to find those responsible and "kick their asses."<sup>23</sup> Specifically citing his limited understanding of military matters, he intended to empower his defense secretary and chairman.<sup>24</sup> After its arrival in the NSS 11 years earlier, terrorism became the primary focus of the United States government.<sup>25</sup>

In the following days, the administration considered the nature of the problem and sought ways to define it. Although broadly in agreement the fight was against terrorism writ large, they debated the order of operations. While some argued for an initial strike limited to al Qaeda, others wanted an attack on both Afghanistan and Iraq as states that sponsored terrorist organizations.<sup>26</sup> Powell and Shelton, weeks from his retirement, argued against attacking Iraq.<sup>27</sup> Still, several others in the administration saw an opportunity to solve a lingering Iraq problem. Rumsfeld began to look for new military solutions beyond the standoff strikes of the previous decade.<sup>28</sup>

At a 15 September National Security Council meeting at Camp David, Shelton presented three military options for an attack in Afghanistan. The options he revealed ranged from standoff missile strikes to a larger joint force attack relying heavily on special operations forces. In contrast to Desert Storm, no off-the-shelf plan was available to use as a starting point for planning. Labeling Shelton's briefing "unimaginative,"

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<sup>21</sup> According to Colin Gray, "The so-mislabelled 'war against terrorism'...has been launched by an understandably vengeful American hegemon that today is the victim both of its recent military successes and of its own growing conviction that in practice the age-old lore of strategy can be short-circuited by high technology. Colin S. Gray, *Defining and Achieving Decisive Victory* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, April 2002), 5.

<sup>22</sup> The president recorded in his diary his belief that 9/11 had been the "Pearl Harbor of the 21st Century." Woodward, *Bush at War*, 37. He further characterized the events of 9/11 not only as acts of terror but also as acts of war. Woodward, *Bush at War*, 45.

<sup>23</sup> Woodward, *Bush at War*, 18.

<sup>24</sup> Woodward, *Bush at War*, 19, 37.

<sup>25</sup> Woodward, *Bush at War*, 41.

<sup>26</sup> Having outlined a vision for America as a global hegemon while serving in the previous Bush administration, Wolfowitz now called for military action against states supporting terrorism. Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 300-01, 312.

<sup>27</sup> Woodward, *Bush at War*, 61.

<sup>28</sup> Woodward, *Bush at War*, 62-63.

Bush's post-attack rhetoric began to meet with reality at Camp David. As the group attempted to frame the problem by considering the views of allies, the breadth of the issues, and the difficulties associated with translating policy into actionable tasks, differences of opinion rendered consensus unattainable.<sup>29</sup> Of note, the vast majority disclosed their opposition against striking Iraq until after action had been taken against al Qaeda.<sup>30</sup>

As planning continued, Rumsfeld decided to use the upcoming Afghanistan operation as a way to gain traction at the Pentagon with his transformation initiative. He believed conducting a war different from the ones for which the military had prepared would force them to change.<sup>31</sup> Reflecting the newness of the operation, the first CIA teams to enter Afghanistan were assigned the mission of assassination by executive order on 19 September—a mission previously considered illegal.<sup>32</sup> Additionally, Bush pressed the National Security Council and the military to start simultaneous ground and air operations without a clear plan or objective for either. During a meeting on 26 September, Bush set a timeframe for starting action in five or six days despite the fact that Shelton did not have the necessary assets in place, a lack of bases prevented ground forces from staging, and Rumsfeld did not have a target set worthy of an air campaign.<sup>33</sup>

The National Security Council principals continued to meet and debate a plan of action. Beyond the fact that America had been attacked and the president wanted to respond using military force in a manner that demonstrated resolve, no one seemed to understand the problem they were trying to solve. Instead of defining the problem and its layers, each member of the war cabinet struggled to discuss what their capabilities and limitations were in meeting the president's desire to do something quickly. Woodward suggests, “they were making it up as they went.”<sup>34</sup> Perhaps part of the problem was the

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<sup>29</sup> Woodward, *Bush at War*, 74-85.

<sup>30</sup> Woodward, *Bush at War*, 91.

<sup>31</sup> Woodward, *Bush at War*, 135.

<sup>32</sup> Cofer Black actually told the operative in charge of the team that Bush wanted bin Laden's head in a box. Woodward, *Bush at War*, 141.

<sup>33</sup> Woodward, *Bush at War*, 152-53.

<sup>34</sup> Stephen Hadley, the president's deputy national security advisor, described the process as “come as you are.” Woodward, *Bush at War*, 182.

seemingly artificial time constraint Bush had placed on them.<sup>35</sup> A strong believer in actions speaking louder than words, he consistently pushed for action as soon as possible.<sup>36</sup>

### Afghanistan

Despite highlighting several important considerations, the administration failed to address them with a coherent strategy. With military and CIA activities a foregone conclusion, the nature of the conflict remained elusive. Although multiple members of the administration referred to the war as a new and different kind of fight, they failed to explain the implications and assumptions of their assertion.<sup>37</sup> Initially, the most unique feature of the fight was that the enemy was not a state. Nevertheless, the Bush Doctrine paradoxically attempted to eradicate even this difference by determining states would be held accountable for the behavior of their residents.<sup>38</sup> Having made that mental leap, the notion of a strong state invading a weak state appears remarkably unoriginal in the narrative of human history.<sup>39</sup>

Perhaps another reason the administration believed in a degree of originality in their war was the way it was conducted. Certainly, the break from the Powell Doctrine in this manner was striking. Instead of the large buildup of forces and footprint that characterized Powell's overwhelming force in 1991, the United States overthrew the Taliban 102 days after 9/11 by joining a combined CIA and military ground force of only 426 people with the local Afghanistan opposition group and American air power.<sup>40</sup> While certainly a remarkable accomplishment at the tactical level, strategic success remains elusive. Bush's own personal scorecard for the war was a list of 22 terrorists,

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<sup>35</sup> In all likelihood, Bush interpreted his high approval ratings to mean he had a mandate for action from the American people. Instead of taking advantage of his popularity to clearly define the problem, he leveraged it to quickly take action. Woodward, *Bush at War*, 206.

<sup>36</sup> Woodward described Bush's leadership style as bordering on the hurried. Woodward, Woodward, *Bush at War*, 256.

<sup>37</sup> For Myers' discussion of the nature of the conflict, see Woodward, *Bush at War*, 220.

<sup>38</sup> The Bush Doctrine derives from his statement, made shortly after 9/11, that "we will make no distinction between those who planned these acts and those who harbor them." Woodward, *Bush at War*, 220.

<sup>39</sup> In many ways, the conflict resembled the Athenians invasion of the much weaker island nation of Melos because the Melians refused to submit to Athenian rules for nations within their sphere of influence. However, Athens did not concern itself with nation building. They exterminated the society and repopulated the island. Thucydides, *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, ed. Robert B. Strassler (New York, NY: Free Press, 1996), 351-57.

<sup>40</sup> Woodward, *Bush at War*, 314.

chief among them Osama bin Laden, he wanted killed or captured. At the end of major combat operations, 16 of the 22 remained at large and bin Laden had apparently escaped.<sup>41</sup> Beyond terrorists, ongoing fighting and an increasingly large and expensive military presence in Afghanistan nearly ten years later cast doubt on the success of the operation. As early as 29 September 2001, the president characterized the war as a guerrilla conflict, yet he also wanted the ability to declare a quick victory while not involving the military in an extended nation-building effort.<sup>42</sup> In a sense, the administration's belief that they were fighting a new kind of war reflects a lack of critical thought regarding the endeavor on which they embarked.<sup>43</sup> The refusal to cope with the true nature of the conflict prevented the kind of planning necessary to determine a suitable end state and a commensurate level of force.

Despite the military's predominate role in the war, senior military leaders retained little influence over its conduct. Bacevich described Myers, and his successor as chairman, Peter Pace, as pliant mediocrities appointed to the position based on the president's desire to control the military by marginalizing its senior military leader.<sup>44</sup> Beyond establishing the chairman's role as the president's senior military advisor, Goldwater-Nichols also ensured combatant commanders had a direct line to the president. Nevertheless, the strong leadership of the secretary of defense appeared to usurp the authority of both. With neither Shelton nor Myers afforded a significant role in the planning process, Gen Tommy Franks' relationship with the president also appeared marginalized in his role as commander of United States Central Command. When Bush asked for his thoughts during a meeting after hostilities had begun, the general told Bush "I think exactly what my secretary thinks, what he's ever thought, what he will ever think, or whatever he thought he might think."<sup>45</sup> Franks spoke these words shortly after

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<sup>41</sup> Woodward, *Bush at War*, 316.

<sup>42</sup> Woodward, *Bush at War*, 175, 215, 237.

<sup>43</sup> Even after fighting on the ground had begun, the administration could not agree on the purpose of the effort, its objectives, or how to prioritize events. Woodward, *Bush at War*, 233.

<sup>44</sup> Bacevich, *The Limits of Power*, 87.

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Woodward, *Bush at War*, 251. O'Hanlon believes "the uniformed military in fact shares some of the blame for the mistakes made in planning the Iraq stabilization mission. That is partly because General Tommy Franks in the end was the author of the plan. Even if he was under pressure from Secretary Rumsfeld to produce a certain concept, he had every opportunity to voice his objections. It is also because the Joint Chiefs of Staff, with the apparent exception of Army Chief of Staff Shinseki, reportedly blessed the plan as well. It is also because no member of the armed forces of the United States

Army Chief of Staff Gen Eric Shinseki had been “ushered into early retirement” by the administration for providing congressional testimony questioning the policy makers’ predictions about the size of force required for the upcoming conflict in Iraq.<sup>46</sup>

### Preparing another War

Before completing the removal of the Taliban from Afghanistan, Bush had already directed the Defense Department to begin planning for an invasion of Iraq.<sup>47</sup> Having been embarrassed by the lack of consensus regarding whether the CIA or the Defense Department was in charge of operations in Afghanistan, Rumsfeld resolved to own America’s efforts in Iraq.<sup>48</sup> Seeking a new way to wage war based on Bush’s campaign pledge of military transformation, Rumsfeld planned the Iraq invasion in a manner inconsistent with the Powell Doctrine.<sup>49</sup> Instead of overwhelming force, he sought to minimize the military footprint. Rumsfeld worked with Franks to implement his plan; Myers maintained virtually no influence on the design.<sup>50</sup>

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went public with his objections or resigned in protest even though the plan was the military equivalent of medical malpractice.” Michael E. O’Hanlon, “Iraq Without a Plan: Next Time Listen to the Generals,” *Policy Review*, no. 128 (December 2004 & January 2005) <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policyreview/3432146.html> (accessed 19 February 2010).

<sup>46</sup> Bacevich, *The Limits of Power*, 98. O’Hanlon suggested, “it is also worth remembering that military officers do not serve just the civilians of the executive branch in their advisory capacities. Of course, they do owe loyalty to that branch, and in particular the chain of command going from the secretary of defense to the president, on matters of war and in response to direct orders. But they also owe the Congress and the country their best advice. When General Shinseki offered the Congress his estimate that several hundred thousand troops could be needed to stabilize post-Saddam Iraq, he may or may not have been substantively correct (and Secretary Rumsfeld and Secretary Wolfowitz were within their rights to publicly debate the facts of the matter with Shinseki in the ensuing days). But he was categorically in the legal and political right to offer the Congress his unvarnished counsel.” O’Hanlon, “Iraq Without a Plan.”

<sup>47</sup> Bush directed the planning to begin on 21 November 2001. Woodward, *State of Denial*, 81.

<sup>48</sup> Woodward, *State of Denial*, 79.

<sup>49</sup> Cohen discussed Rumsfeld’s departure from Powell’s principles, highlighting his work-around for a lack of public support, his desire to act early, his belief in acceptable risk rather than the necessity of overwhelming force, his lack of regard for end states, and his argument against using force as a last resort. Eliot Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesman, and Leadership in Wartime* (New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 2002), 229. Dobbins underscored the results of Rumsfeld’s distension of use of force principles: “The Rumsfeld vision of ‘defense transformation’ may have been well suited to conventional combat against vastly inferior adversaries, but it became a much more expensive approach to post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction than the then-out-of-fashion Powell doctrine.” James Dobbins, “Organizing for Victory,” *Prism* 1, no.1 (December 2009): 54. Bacevich highlighted Rumsfeld’s claims suggesting that war had somehow changed. Bacevich, *American Empire*, 226.

<sup>50</sup> Franks considered Myers irrelevant in the process. With a reputation as a temperamental general, Franks took the perspective of Rumsfeld and described the Joint Chiefs of Staff as the “Title Ten Motherfuckers.” Quoted in Woodward, *State of Denial*, 82.

## 2002 NSS

As the Defense Department planned Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Bush administration released their first NSS nearly a year after 9/11. After viewing a draft submitted by one of Powell's senior aides, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice ordered a complete rewrite to create a more dramatic break with what she considered outdated ideas of national security.<sup>51</sup> Instead of a break, the final version continued the trend of expanding applications for the use of force. Having succeeded in overthrowing the Taliban, the administration continued to focus on the importance of defeating terrorism. The strategy also foreshadowed operations in Iraq by introducing the term rogue states and highlighted the danger they posed if allowed to acquire weapons of mass destruction.<sup>52</sup> Consistent with earlier statements made by the president, the 2002 NSS outlined the strategy to hold states accountable for terrorists operating within their borders.<sup>53</sup> In a breathtaking statement of intent, the president also declared, "as a matter of common sense and self-defense, America will act against such emerging threats [enemies acquiring dangerous technologies] before they are fully formed."<sup>54</sup> The strategy further included a stated role for America to safeguard and improve the entire world.<sup>55</sup> Finally, the administration followed the trend of its predecessors by stating the desire for a military with a wider range of options for policy makers.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, 316.

<sup>52</sup> According to the strategy, rogue states emerged in the 1990s. These states were defined by their tendency to brutalize their populations, disregard international law, seek weapons of mass destruction, sponsor terrorism, and reject basic human values. The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Office of the President, September 2002), 13-14.

<sup>53</sup> In Bush's cover letter he stated, "America will hold to account nations that are compromised by terror, including those who harbor terrorists." The White House, *The National Security Strategy* (September 2002), cover letter.

<sup>54</sup> Bush also suggested, "in the new world we have entered, the only path to peace and security is the path of action." Later the administration claimed the threat of weapons of mass destruction means "we cannot let our enemies strike first," and that deterrence is not likely to work...necessitating a preemptive strike. The White House, *The National Security Strategy* (September 2002), cover letter, 15.

<sup>55</sup> Instead of tying the national strategy to national interests, the Bush administration claimed, "the aim of this strategy is to help make the world not just safer but better." This statement is consistent with Woodward's recounting of Bush's stated intention to achieve world peace. Woodward further described Bush's frustration with world leaders who refused to equate their national interests with America's regarding the fight against terrorism. The White House, *The National Security Strategy* (September 2002), 1. See also Woodward, *Bush at War*, 282, 327.

<sup>56</sup> The White House, *The National Security Strategy* (September 2002), 30.

## Iraq

The options for Iraq narrowed to one: invasion. After more than a year of planning and debate the president had decided. Bush wanted the chief dissenter in his administration on his side. On 13 January 2003, he summoned Powell to the Oval Office to disclose his decision and request the secretary's support. Once the president acknowledged his ownership of Iraq after overthrowing the regime, Powell relented and told Bush he was with him.<sup>57</sup> Instead of taking a lead role in strategy and planning as he had a decade prior, Powell's major contribution came in the form of diplomacy. The Bush administration used his reputation as a reluctant warrior to convince a wary American public of the need to invade Iraq.<sup>58</sup> Less than a month after agreeing to support Bush's decision for war, Powell presented a compelling argument that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction during his presentation to the United Nations. Now that the president had decided on war, Powell convinced the American public of the need.<sup>59</sup>

With Rumsfeld's transformation agenda on the line, the military invaded Iraq using a much smaller force than had been leveraged in 1991.<sup>60</sup> Despite Operation Iraqi Freedom's loftier objective of regime change, Rumsfeld's theory of acceptable risk replaced Powell's principle of overwhelming force. The objective had changed from liberating Kuwait after Iraqi aggression to preventing a rogue nation from using weapons of mass destruction against American interests. Instead of the critical role played by the chairman in 1991, Myers could hardly have been less influential in 2003. Despite the differences, conventional military operations yielded similar results. The war began on 19 March 2003 with a failed attempt at assassinating Saddam Hussein using a strike on

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<sup>57</sup> Woodward, *State of Denial*, 106.

<sup>58</sup> DeYoung cites a poll conducted the morning of Powell's speech to the United Nations suggesting Americans trusted Powell more than Bush regarding America's policy toward Iraq by a margin of 63 to 24 percent. Karen DeYoung, *Soldier: The Life of Colin Powell* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 448.

<sup>59</sup> DeYoung describes the administration's intent as having little to do with convincing the international audience. Instead, Powell's reputation was used to convince the American public of the case against Saddam Hussein. Powell's role was that of an expert witness whose position on the matter carried enough weight to offset the jury's hesitation in convicting the accused. Instead of his determination to convince the elder Bush of the importance of caution and preparation before using force in 1991, Powell was used by the younger Bush to convince the nation to throw caution to the wind in 2003. DeYoung, *Soldier*, 446-52.

<sup>60</sup> Franks original plan called for 250,000 ground troops. Believing 70,000 sufficient, Rumsfeld ordered Franks to re-evaluate. The final plan included only 125,000 army and marine ground troops. By contrast, the totals used in the 1991 war dwarfed any of these numbers. Jim Miklaszewski, "War boosted Rumsfeld's mission," *Microsoft/National Broadcasting Company*, 12 March 2004, [http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4400657/ns/world\\_news-conflict\\_in\\_iraq/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4400657/ns/world_news-conflict_in_iraq/) (accessed 29 April 2010).

the Dora Farms complex. Less than two months later, on 1 May 2003, Bush declared the end of major combat operations on the deck of the aircraft carrier *Abraham Lincoln* in front of a huge banner reading “Mission Accomplished.”<sup>61</sup> Having removed the regime from power in short order with few friendly casualties, Rumsfeld’s plan appeared ingenious.

### Mission Accomplished?

Unfortunately, his prewar planning had not adequately resolved conflicts within the administration regarding what to do after deposing the regime. Although he had appointed a retired three-star army general to oversee postwar Iraq, the unresolved tension regarding the use of American military forces to conduct a nation-building mission remained unresolved. In the Bush administration, no one wanted to own postwar Iraq. After toppling the regime, Rumsfeld wanted to avoid a lengthy military commitment similar to the one in the Balkans.<sup>62</sup> On the other hand, the State Department did not have the resources required for the project.<sup>63</sup> Having failed to examine and remedy these issues prior to the invasion, the Bush administration’s lack of leadership resulted in catastrophe.

As the administration continued to flounder, the situation on the ground worsened. Jay Garner, the retired three-star army general Rumsfeld had placed in charge of postwar Iraq, made a valiant effort to address problems and defuse the crisis. Unfortunately, Garner did not have the full support of his own boss to carry out his mission.<sup>64</sup> Before Bush had even made his speech on the *Abraham Lincoln*, Rumsfeld had picked Garner’s replacement. Despite his belief that the transition from military to

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<sup>61</sup> Woodward, *State of Denial*, 186-87.

<sup>62</sup> Larry DiRita, Rumsfeld’s special assistant, described how he wanted to prevent getting stuck in Iraq because the State Department could not do its job. Woodward, *State of Denial*, 162.

<sup>63</sup> Realizing the disparity between task and resources, Robin Raphael, the senior representative of the State Department in Iraq, suggested the purpose of the reconstruction team in Iraq was simply to “put our finger in the dike...and within weeks we’re going to be on our knees to the U.N. and the international community.” Woodward, *State of Denial*, 164.

<sup>64</sup> Woodward described how “Rumsfeld just didn’t think Garner’s group was the A team.” Rumsfeld’s lack of support meant Garner’s efforts were marginalized in Iraq. Rumsfeld would not approve his list of leaders for the Iraqi ministries despite his lack of a suitable alternative. Garner was initially prevented from getting into Baghdad to prevent a descent into chaos. He was also prevented from speaking to the press. Woodward, *State of Denial*, 162, 169, 172.

civilian control was taking place too rapidly, Garner was not asked for his opinion.<sup>65</sup> After Powell concurred with Rumsfeld's choice, Bush appointed Paul "Jerry" Bremer as his presidential envoy in Iraq.<sup>66</sup> On 9 May 2003, Bremer became senior to everyone in Iraq other than Franks and Rumsfeld. Newt Gingrich later described the presidential envoy as "the largest single disaster in American foreign policy in modern times."<sup>67</sup>

Bremer quickly went to work dismantling the remnants of organized society in Iraq. He saw himself as a modern day MacArthur dealing with a country of second-class citizens.<sup>68</sup> Although he had extensive experience in foreign policy and counterterrorism, Bremer was not an expert on the Middle East.<sup>69</sup> Nevertheless, he ignored the advice of the team on the ground in Iraq and issued two critical orders shortly after his arrival. The first order, a de-Ba'athification policy, banned the top four ranks of Ba'ath Party leaders from further government service.<sup>70</sup> Garner and a CIA expert warned Bremer that the order would put 50,000 of "the most powerful, well-connected elites from all walks of life" underground and make them anti-American.<sup>71</sup> Bremer said he had no choice. The second order disbanded the entire Iraqi military.<sup>72</sup> Paul Hughes, an army colonel on Garner's staff, believed the move had made an enemy out of more than a hundred thousand Iraqis who would have happily worked with the American leadership.<sup>73</sup> The day after the order was sent, an American intelligence agent prophetically announced what he called "the beginning" after noting that the former Iraqi military members felt slighted and had munitions in their garages.<sup>74</sup>

As the situation in Iraq continued to spin out of control, Bush deferred to his secretary of defense and largely ignored the other senior advisers in the administration. Limited by the secretary's perspective and with little first-hand knowledge of the events

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<sup>65</sup> Woodward, *State of Denial*, 192.

<sup>66</sup> Woodward, *State of Denial*, 173-74, 182.

<sup>67</sup> Quoted in Woodward, *State of Denial*, 252.

<sup>68</sup> Woodward, *State of Denial*, 249.

<sup>69</sup> Woodward, *State of Denial*, 190.

<sup>70</sup> Woodward, *State of Denial*, 193.

<sup>71</sup> Quoted in Woodward, *State of Denial*, 194.

<sup>72</sup> Woodward, *State of Denial*, 195.

<sup>73</sup> Woodward, *State of Denial*, 207.

<sup>74</sup> Woodward, *State of Denial*, 207.

in Iraq, Myers errantly believed the initial months of the occupation were going well.<sup>75</sup> Powell's influence continued to wane.<sup>76</sup> Even Condoleezza Rice lacked the same degree of influence as Rumsfeld.<sup>77</sup> Unfortunately, the powerful secretary of defense played the interests of influential groups against each other and became an obstacle to progress in Iraq.<sup>78</sup> Even Rumsfeld's closest friends began to question his leadership and influence.<sup>79</sup> The tensions among the principles were obvious, yet Bush did little to resolve them.<sup>80</sup>

As the dysfunctional administration continued to sputter, the effect of Bremer's orders in Iraq became apparent. "Enemy-initiated attacks against the coalition and Iraqis had numbered around 200 in June 2003. By the summer of 2004 they were around 1,750 per month."<sup>81</sup> Despite the trend, Bremer quickly exited Iraq in June after signing documents officially ending the American occupation and turning over the senior civilian position in Iraq to a much less visible United States ambassador role filled by John Negroponte. As the violence increased, several questioned the wisdom of proceeding with the first democratic Iraqi election planned for 30 January 2005.<sup>82</sup> Once again,

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<sup>75</sup> Frank Miller, an experienced Pentagon bureaucrat and Rice's senior director for defense in the National Security Council, believed Myers lacked the concern required to ensure adequate support for the forces in Iraq. Woodward, *State of Denial*, 275, 302-03.

<sup>76</sup> Richard Armitage, the deputy secretary of state, described Powell and himself as window dressing for the administration. He described the State Department leadership as "about as influential as a couple of potted plants." Woodward, *State of Denial*, 230. In 2004, Steinberger accused Powell of lacking vision and backbone as he discussed his nearly complete impotence in the Bush administration. Michael Steinberger, "Misoverestimated," *The American Prospect*, 15 November 2004, <http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=misoverestimated> (accessed 1 May 2010).

<sup>77</sup> According to Woodward, "it was as if Rice and the NSC had one serious, formal process going on while the president and Rumsfeld had another one—informal, chatty and dominant." Woodward, *State of Denial*, 276.

<sup>78</sup> Garner realized late in the game how Rumsfeld had misled him regarding who had made the decision for his replacement in Iraq. Rumsfeld's obstruction of the plan to embed American forces in Iraqi military units slowed the process of transferring security to the Iraqis and denied the president the political boost he desired to achieve by emphasizing the importance of the program. Bremer told Bush, "Don terrifies his civilian subordinates so that I can rarely get any decisions out of anyone but him. This works all right, but isn't ideal." Woodward, *State of Denial*, 224, 262, 288-89, 310.

<sup>79</sup> Steve Herbits, "Rumsfeld's one-man think tank" and his "friend of 37 years," clearly described the secretary's shortcomings in July 2004. His list of adjectives included indecisive, arrogant, untrusting, cautious, and abusive of his subordinates. Woodward, *State of Denial*, 316-17.

<sup>80</sup> Rumsfeld and Powell reached the point where they were unable to carry on civil discourse. The friction at their level only exacerbated existing tensions between the lower levels of state and defense. Woodward described the scene as "Rice, dutiful, informed and polite, at one end of the table, and the inexperienced president at the other, legs dancing, while the bulls staked out their ground, almost snorting defiantly, hoofs pawing the table, daring a challenge that never came." Woodward, *State of Denial*, 241-242.

<sup>81</sup> Woodward, *State of Denial*, 327.

<sup>82</sup> The Sunnis made it clear they would boycott the election. The United Nations' Lakhdar Brahimi and Iraqi Prime Minister Allawi requested a delay to avoid their disenfranchisement in the new government.

Myers was excluded from the decision.<sup>83</sup> Despite CIA warnings of the potential for civil war, the president refused to move the date.<sup>84</sup> Shortly after touting the importance of freedom and liberty in his second inaugural address, Bush observed television coverage of the elections in Iraq.<sup>85</sup> Although the high voter turnout and minimal violence during the election appeared highly successful, the Sunnis had followed through with their threat to boycott and violence continued to escalate.<sup>86</sup>

## Searching for a Strategy

### 2004 NMS

Leading up to the elections, Myers released the first update of the NMS since 1997.<sup>87</sup> Completed in May 2004, the chairman's document looked backward more than it looked forward. Reflecting the administration's justification for invading Iraq, the strategy document juxtaposed concepts of offense and defense to justify the application of force. Claiming the possession of weapons of mass destruction provided justification, the strategy suggested self-defense implied the necessity to attack other nations who possessed them in order to prevent conflict.<sup>88</sup> Emphasizing the difference between America's Cold War intent to use latent force as a deterrent and the post-Cold War intent to use force applied as a political solution, the document claimed "the application of military force to achieve the objectives of the NMS is the primary task of the Armed Forces."<sup>89</sup> Although the strategy briefly mentioned the importance of stability

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Several of the National Security Council principles also harbored doubt about pressing forward with the elections. Woodward, *State of Denial*, 370.

<sup>83</sup> Woodward, *State of Denial*, 371.

<sup>84</sup> Woodward, *State of Denial*, 370, 375-76.

<sup>85</sup> Woodward, *State of Denial*, 377-78, 383.

<sup>86</sup> "Enemy-initiated attacks had jumped from about 2,000 in December to 3,000 in January." Woodward, *State of Denial*, 383.

<sup>87</sup> Myers' 2004 document is still the most current NMS as of this writing.

<sup>88</sup> The strategy grouped together the concepts of weapons of mass destruction and weapons of mass effect under the acronym WMD/E. These weapons included those with chemical, biological, radiological, enhanced high explosive, and cyber capabilities. Department of Defense, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2004), 1, 2, 5.

<sup>89</sup> Department of Defense, *The National Military Strategy* (2004), 16. In contrast, Gray highlights the similarities between the objectives of deterrence and those of limited war. Essentially making the case that deterrence and compellence are both forms of coercion, Gray states, "the logic of decisive victory in limited war is generically identical to the logic of success in deterrence. In both cases, the enemy has to choose to cooperate, albeit under duress, if we are to claim some variant of decisive success. He can choose to fight on, calculating that the political decision we seek will be judged by us not to be worth the

operations, it did not prepare the military for its immediate future by highlighting counterinsurgency principles.<sup>90</sup> Perhaps the most forward-looking concept in the document foretold the arrival of the inaugural national defense strategy document.

## **2005 National Defense Strategy (NDS)**

Consistent with his nature, Rumsfeld could not resist the opportunity to influence the Department of Defense to an even greater extent by releasing his own strategy document. Published in March 2005, America's first NDS asserted, "we are confronting fundamentally different challenges from those faced by the American defense establishment in the Cold War and previous eras."<sup>91</sup> Assuming the role of global judge and jury, the strategy further claimed the importance of taking action when other nations did not meet their external or internal obligations.<sup>92</sup> Based on the 2002 NSS, Rumsfeld once again highlighted the requirement to attack an adversary in order to prevent their use of weapons capable of catastrophic consequences.<sup>93</sup> In contrast to the recently released 2004 NMS, Rumsfeld's strategy described his intent to reorient the military to fight irregular warfare as it continued transforming to meet future challenges.<sup>94</sup>

## **A New Chairman: Peter Pace**

While Rumsfeld continued to trumpet the importance of defense transformation, the choice of Pace to replace Myers demonstrated the administration's desire for status quo. Despite the fact that Pace was the first Marine to serve as the chairman, the most telling fact was that he and Myers both moved into the position after observing the relationship between Rumsfeld and the chairman from the position of vice chairman.<sup>95</sup>

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human, economic, and political costs of protracted, and possibly more intense, combat." Gray, *Defining and Achieving Decisive Victory*, 17.

<sup>90</sup> Department of Defense, *The National Military Strategy* (2004), 14.

<sup>91</sup> Despite the proposed contrast, the strategy later discussed the eras' similarities by stating, "as in the Cold War, victory will come only when the ideological motivation for the terrorists' activities has been discredited and no longer has the power to motivate streams of individuals to risk and sacrifice their lives." Department of Defense, *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary, March 2005), iii, 9.

<sup>92</sup> Department of Defense, *The National Defense Strategy* (March 2005), 1.

<sup>93</sup> Department of Defense, *The National Defense Strategy* (March 2005), 3, 8.

<sup>94</sup> Department of Defense, *The National Defense Strategy* (March 2005), 3.

<sup>95</sup> Although Myers served as the vice chairman for approximately 18 months before becoming chairman, Pace served as Myers' vice for his entire term.

Questioned about why he wanted a thankless job working for such a domineering secretary, Pace responded, “someone had to be chairman. Who else would do it?”<sup>96</sup> After observing the secretary for four years as the vice, Pace’s unspoken endorsement of Rumsfeld’s emasculating methods, made clear by his acceptance of the appointment, was as obvious if he had actually said it out loud.

Unsurprisingly, Pace proved no more influential than had his predecessor. Brent Scowcroft, the elder Bush’s national security advisor, believed “Myers...was a broken man, a puppy dog. General Pace was worse.”<sup>97</sup> Thomas Ricks described Pace as “a weak chairman, seemingly unwilling to stand up to Rumsfeld when other generals thought he should and instead trying to simply ease the discord at the Pentagon between uniformed military and its civilian overseers.”<sup>98</sup> He also avoided interfering in the affairs of the military leaders responsible for the war’s conduct.<sup>99</sup> Pace’s selection as chairman represented the next in a series of actions designed to make complete Rumsfeld’s hostile takeover of independent military advice.<sup>100</sup>

## 2006 NSS

Regardless of the advice he received, the president clung to his hope that conditions on the ground would improve without changing the overall strategy. Even as former Prime Minister Ayad Allawi suggested the Iraqi death rate in March 2006—now at 50 to 60 per day—offered certain proof of civil war, Bush defended the secretary of defense and his strategy.<sup>101</sup> The president released his second NSS the same month

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<sup>96</sup> Woodward, *State of Denial*, 403.

<sup>97</sup> Woodward, *State of Denial*, 420.

<sup>98</sup> Thomas E. Ricks, *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006-2008* (New York, NY: The Penguin Press, 2009), 43.

<sup>99</sup> Ricks describes Pace as inconsequential in determining the strategy in Iraq, stating that he usually deferred to “the four-star officers directly involved in its prosecution.” Ricks, *The Gamble*, 43. One Pentagon official concluded, “he brought no strategic vision and no determined leadership—and the nation was at war. He is an honorable, genuinely nice man, but a tool for others.” Quoted in Ricks, *The Gamble*, 102.

<sup>100</sup> Woodward described how General Jones, then the NATO commander, told Pace the Joint Chiefs “were not generating independent military advice as they had a legal obligation to do.” The combatant commanders and service chiefs met as a group to discuss the issue with Myers, but “no one seemed willing to take on the secretary of defense.” Grasping for a reason why the military’s advice was so unwelcome, Woodward finally concluded, “meeting the president’s emotional and political needs was apparently more important” than providing him with constructive criticism. Woodward, *State of Denial*, 470, 483.

<sup>101</sup> Woodward, *State of Denial*, 453-54.

Allawi made his assertion.<sup>102</sup> The 2006 NSS once again claimed the world's interests were equal to the interests of the United States.<sup>103</sup> Despite the deteriorating conditions in Iraq pointing at the failings of a strategy of force application, Bush claimed deterrence could not work against terrorists.<sup>104</sup> Continuing a theme from the Clinton administration, the document tied American national interests to protecting the citizens of other states from the actions of their own governments.<sup>105</sup> Demonstrating his continued belief that the military should not build nations, Bush's strategy touted the newly created Office of Reconstruction and Stabilization and the Civilian Reserve Corps as important for post-conflict reconstruction and stabilization.<sup>106</sup> In the most striking statement of the document, Bush claimed the strategy was "idealistic about goals, and realistic about means."<sup>107</sup> Better than any other, this statement reflects the trend away from Cold War realism to a modern version of Woodrow Wilson's vision of a world without conflict.

### New Faces Bring a New Strategy

At the end of 2006, the American public displayed its lack of faith in the Iraq strategy by dealing the president's party a devastating defeat in the midterm congressional election. One day later, the president announced his decision to replace his secretary of defense.<sup>108</sup> Ricks described the Marines' incident at Haditha at the end of 2005 as the turning point in the war, with the 12 months leading up to election day as "a period of agonizingly slow reassessment of the U.S. military's approach in Iraq."<sup>109</sup> Supported by his chief of staff, Bush interpreted the election results as a signal that it was

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<sup>102</sup> Similar to the 2004 NMS, the 2006 NSS is the most current version as of this writing.

<sup>103</sup> The first page of the strategy suggests "the goal of statecraft is to help create a world of democratic, well-governed states that can meet the needs of their citizens and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system." The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Office of the President, March 2006), 1. According to Woodward, "when it came to fighting terrorism, the president also wanted world leaders to equate their national interests with American interests." Woodward, *Bush at War*, 327.

<sup>104</sup> The White House, *The National Security Strategy* (March 2006), 12.

<sup>105</sup> "We cannot pretend that our interests are unaffected by states' treatment of their own citizens." The White House, *The National Security Strategy* (March 2006), 36.

<sup>106</sup> The White House, *The National Security Strategy* (March 2006), 44-45.

<sup>107</sup> The White House, *The National Security Strategy* (March 2006), 49.

<sup>108</sup> The president overruled Cheney's objection to the move. NBC News and The Associated Press, "Rumsfeld stepping down: President taps ex-CIA chief Gates to replace embattled defense secretary," *Microsoft/National Broadcasting Company*, 8 November 2006, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15622266/> (accessed 1 May 2010).

<sup>109</sup> Ricks, *The Gamble*, 9.

time for Rumsfeld to leave.<sup>110</sup> The secretary's replacement, former CIA Director Robert Gates, was a friend of the Bush family's who had recently served as a member of the Iraq Study Group, a bipartisan panel responsible for making recommendations on the strategy in Iraq.<sup>111</sup>

Among Gates' first acts was a complete restructuring of military leadership. Based largely on the inputs of Jack Keane, a retired army general fearful of the mishandled war's effect on his service, the incumbent leaders and the enemy-focused strategy of killing and capturing were removed.<sup>112</sup> In their place, Gates oversaw the transition to leadership of a population-centric strategy.<sup>113</sup> The strategy centered on the newly published counterinsurgency manual that had been drafted under the leadership and direction of then-Lt Gen David Petraeus the previous year.<sup>114</sup> The new strategy meant the old notions of a swift exit, largely based on Bush's repeated sentiments that the military does not do nation building, were purged from the system.<sup>115</sup> The new leadership took the reins of a long war dedicated to clearing, holding, and building.<sup>116</sup> In the wake of the November elections and the departure of Donald Rumsfeld, the president embraced the change in strategy based on the inputs of a bevy of realists and skeptics who now gained a voice in the administration's policy.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> NBC News and The Associated Press, "Rumsfeld stepping down."

<sup>111</sup> "Bush replaces Rumsfeld to get 'fresh perspective,'" *Cable News Network*, 9 November 2006, <http://www.cnn.com/2006/POLITICS/11/08/rumsfeld/> (accessed 1 May 2010).

<sup>112</sup> Gen David Petraeus replaced Gen George Casey, the senior coalition commander and army general who had replaced Gen Ricardo Sanchez in 2004. Gen John Abizaid, the army's Central Command commander who had replaced Franks, retired and was replaced by Adm William Fallon.

<sup>113</sup> Ricks, *The Gamble*, 122.

<sup>114</sup> Ricks, *The Gamble*, 18.

<sup>115</sup> Ricks described the paradox of Bush's beliefs about the military's role in nation building by contrasting his campaign rhetoric suggesting the military should not do it with the fact that "he went on to invade Iraq and inadvertently launch perhaps the most ambitious and expensive nation-building effort in the history of the United States." Ricks, *The Gamble*, 293. O'Sullivan underscored how the Bush administration turned its back on the campaign promise to not build nations by planning for post-war Iraq. O'Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 174. As early as 2004, Bush publicly acknowledged that the military was involved in nation building in Iraq. Yet, aware of his hypocrisy, he refused to fully embrace the implications of a nation-building strategy by choosing instead to focus on quickly transferring power to the Iraqis. Perhaps this self-inflicted act of denial played a role in preventing him from acknowledging earlier the need for a new strategy. George W. Bush, interview by Tim Russert in the Oval Office, "Meet the Press," *National Broadcasting Company*, 7 February 2004, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4179618/> (accessed 1 May 2010).

<sup>116</sup> Ricks, *The Gamble*, 124.

<sup>117</sup> Ricks, *The Gamble*, 128.

Although conventional wisdom claims the turn around in Iraq happened because of an increase in the number of American forces, the most important changes had little to do with greater force.<sup>118</sup> In a 20-page essay, Petraeus's strategic advisor explained the new strategy that arrived prior to the additional forces. Perhaps the biggest change involved accepting the reality that the American endeavor in Iraq would not achieve the free and democratic ally in the Middle East envisioned by the president when he ordered the invasion in 2003.<sup>119</sup> Another crucial change was the attempt to co-opt extremists instead of focusing solely on killing or capturing them.<sup>120</sup> Additionally, Petraeus planned to stop the rush to failure of transitioning to Iraqi control even though the new government was not yet capable.<sup>121</sup> Emma Sky, a British pacifist critical of the initial strategy and a member of Petraeus's advisory team, described the drastic change of the United States military from "Christian crusaders seeking revenge for 9/11" to a completely different mind-set in 2007.<sup>122</sup> In a sense, the United States military had transformed, but not the way Rumsfeld envisioned transformation as he battled the Pentagon bureaucracy for six long years.

### A New Chairman: Michael Mullen

The last member of the old guard to depart was Pace. Serving the shortest tenure as chairman in more than 40 years, Pace departed his position amidst Gates' claim that the move was necessary to avoid "a backward-looking debate about the last four years" during his confirmation hearing.<sup>123</sup> Pace's replacement was Navy Adm Michael Mullen. Instead of moving up from the position of vice chairman, Mullen was appointed after serving two years as the chief of naval operations. With the majority of the attention shifted to Petraeus and his team in Iraq, Mullen quietly oversaw the remainder of the

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<sup>118</sup> Ricks states, "the surge was more about how to use troops than it was about the number of them." Ricks, *The Gamble*, 165.

<sup>119</sup> Ricks, *The Gamble*, 156.

<sup>120</sup> Ricks, *The Gamble*, 157-58.

<sup>121</sup> Ricks, *The Gamble*, 158.

<sup>122</sup> Ricks, *The Gamble*, 163.

<sup>123</sup> Democrat Senator Carl Levin as quoted in Barbara Starr and Suzanne Malveaux, "Pace leaving as Joint Chiefs chairman," *Cable News Network*, 8 June 2007, <http://www.cnn.com/2007/POLITICS/06/08/gates.pace/index.html> (accessed 1 May 2010).

surge and the slow but steady positive gains that began to take place in Iraq at the end of 2007 into 2008.

## 2008 NDS

As conditions on the ground improved, Gates turned his attention to drafting the second version of the NDS. Released in June 2008, the strategy's central theme was integrating within the broader framework of the international political system, the interagency capabilities of the entire United States government, and the combined skill sets offered by each service within the department.<sup>124</sup> Although the strategy still reserved the right to preemptively attack an adversary to prevent a hostile act, the overriding emphasis was shaping the environment so such actions were unnecessary.<sup>125</sup> With a strong emphasis on deterrence over force application, the strategy suggested military capabilities must nest within a broader strategy to prevent other actors from taking hostile actions.<sup>126</sup> After labeling the fight against violent extremism "the long war," the 2008 NDS claimed the military's most important role is not the application of force, but instead the preparation of partner nations to "defend and govern themselves."<sup>127</sup> Despite the long war's top priority, Gates' analysis underscored the importance of staying prepared for interstate conflict by stating, "we ignore it at our own peril."<sup>128</sup> Although written in the final year of the Bush administration, Barack Obama elected to keep the document and its architect as he entered office in January 2009.

## A New Administration

In the days leading up to the Obama administration's arrival in the White House, the tenuous peace achieved by the change of strategy in Iraq continued to show signs of promise. Attention instead focused on the problem of a resurgent Taliban in Afghanistan. After campaigning on the illegitimacy of America's actions in Iraq and the requirement

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<sup>124</sup> The 2008 version of the NDS is the most current as of this writing.

<sup>125</sup> Specifically regarding non-state actors with weapons of mass destruction, the strategy suggested the Defense Department can assist with a response, but that it should not take the lead in handling the problem. Department of Defense, *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary, March 2008), 7, 14.

<sup>126</sup> Department of Defense, *The National Defense Strategy* (March 2008), 11, 12.

<sup>127</sup> Department of Defense, *The National Defense Strategy* (March 2008), 8.

<sup>128</sup> Department of Defense, *The National Defense Strategy* (March 2008), 13.

to address the real problem posed by extremists in the Middle East, Obama promised to bring American forces home from Iraq as soon as possible while refocusing the military effort on Afghanistan.<sup>129</sup> In an address at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina in February 2009, Obama announced the completion of his administration's comprehensive review of Iraq policy that resulted in his determination to remove all combat brigades from the country by 31 August 2010.<sup>130</sup> Yet the president did not plan to remove all military forces.<sup>131</sup> During this same speech, he also introduced his intended review of the policy in Afghanistan.

The administration made several major changes in Afghanistan. As the policy review continued in May 2009, Gates announced the replacement of the war's senior commander. Shortly thereafter, Gen Stanley McChrystal, the director of the Joint Staff, replaced Gen David McKiernan. The incoming commander brought with him extensive special operations experience, having led America's Joint Special Operations Command in its pursuit of insurgent leaders in Iraq from 2006 to 2008.<sup>132</sup> Six months after McChrystal's arrival, Obama announced the completion of his administration's Afghanistan policy review. During a speech made at West Point in December 2010, the president announced his intention to send 30,000 additional ground forces to Afghanistan and the implementation of an 18-month timetable for beginning their withdrawal.<sup>133</sup>

Regarding the use of force, the defense secretary and chairman both support McChrystal's population-centered strategy in Afghanistan.<sup>134</sup> During a speech at Kansas State University in March 2010, Mullen discussed his considerations for the proper use of

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<sup>129</sup> After securing the Democratic nomination, Obama included his position on Iraq in his victory speech by stating, "we must be as careful getting out of Iraq as we were careless getting in. But start leaving we must. It's time for Iraqis to take responsibility for their future." Quoted in Ricks, *The Gamble*, 292.

<sup>130</sup> Barack Obama, (address, Camp Lejeune, NC, 27 February 2009).

<sup>131</sup> Obama's plan remains in tact. Yet 50,000 American military personnel will remain in the country. Eric Walsh, "Odierno 'confident' U.S. Iraq drawdown on schedule," *Reuters*, 18 April 2010, <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE63H1L620100418> (accessed 2 May 2010). According to the president, these forces will be used to "pursue al Qaeda, protect the embassy and other American personnel, and train and support Iraqi security forces." Ricks, *The Gamble*, 308.

<sup>132</sup> Ann Scott Tyson, "Top U.S. Commander in Afghanistan Is Fired," *The Washington Post*, 12 May 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/11/AR2009051101864.html> (accessed 2 May 2010).

<sup>133</sup> Barack Obama (address, West Point, NY, 1 December 2009).

<sup>134</sup> McChrystal's strategy underscores the importance of the population and a whole-of-government approach while down-playing the tendency to resort to overt uses of force. Gen Stanley A. McChrystal, Commander, International Security Assistance Force, to all subordinate forces, memorandum, 10 November 2009.

military forces. Mullen reinforced the foundation of McChrystal's strategy by highlighting three principles guiding the use of force: 1) "military power should not—maybe cannot—be the last resort of the state," 2) "force should be applied in a precise and principled way," and 3) "policy and strategy should constantly struggle with one another."<sup>135</sup> The chairman emphasized the importance of winning over the population by suggesting the battlefield now resides in the minds of people, and no longer in an actual physical location.<sup>136</sup> Despite apparent consensus between civilian and military leaders, it is still too early to discern the outcome of the current strategy in Afghanistan as NATO forces there continue to battle the resurgent Taliban.

## **Summary**

Nevertheless, the Obama administration's policy offers little reason to believe the trend toward expanding the uses of American military power will change. After eight years of expansion under the Clinton administration, Bush used the terrorist attacks as rationale to continue the trend. Beyond intervening in other states' internal affairs for humanitarian purposes and using military force as a punishment against terrorist organizations, Bush declared states who failed to hold non-state actors accountable for their actions were de facto hostile regimes subject to punitive action by the United States. Bush's decision to "make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them" opened yet another door to the ongoing tendency of American presidents to apply force rather than reap the benefits of latent force using statesmanship.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Regarding his first principle, the chairman also suggested that force "should never be the only tool" employed by the state. Regarding his second principle, Mullen distanced himself from the concept of overwhelming force to emphasize the importance of using the proper force in a manner that protects the population from its negative effects. Along the lines of Eliot Cohen's theory, the chairman's third principle highlights the importance of an iterative discussion between policy-makers and military strategists that seeks continuing advantage instead of rigidly adhering to a strategy that promises a decisive victory. Adm Michael Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Landon Lecture Series Remarks" (address, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS, 3 March 2010).

<sup>136</sup> Consideration of Sun Tzu's statement that "to subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill" suggests that conventional wisdom about war's conduct, not warfare itself, has changed. Sun Tzu, *The Illustrated Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), 115. See also Mullen, "Landon Lecture Series Remarks."

<sup>137</sup> George W. Bush, (address, White House Oval Office, Washington, DC: 20 September 2001).

Conventional wisdom in the United States suggests 9/11 changed the world forever. Certainly, major changes in both foreign and domestic policy were instituted in its aftermath. Yet 9/11 was less of a turning point than it was an accelerant. Just as the Clinton administration intended to expand American influence around the globe during its tenure, the Bush administration sought to continue the theme. In a larger sense, the attack opened the door to a more liberal use of force as a means to the same end. Having entered office with visions of hegemonic power leading to world peace, the Bush administration's vast experience in defense policy streamlined the decision to use force in Afghanistan and called into question the basic assumptions of foreign policy precedents held over from the Cold War. Vindicated by a relatively quick and painless victory over the Taliban in Afghanistan using an extremely small military footprint, the Bush administration became convinced of a technological revolution in military affairs that would allow greater freedom from the rules governing previous conflicts.<sup>138</sup>

Yet the events on the ground in Iraq demonstrated the continuing simple truth that the enemy gets a vote in determining the nature of the conflict. After marginalizing the influence of Colin Powell, the Pentagon, and traditional allies based on a sense of empowerment, Bush trusted in Rumsfeld's stewardship of the effort in Iraq. The speed of the drive to Baghdad and the resultant toppling of the regime there supported the conclusion that he was capable. Yet the following three years of little progress, increasing casualties, and sectarian violence revealed the limitations of force application and superior technology when facing a determined enemy. Instead of departing Iraq with the victory Bush coveted so dearly, the administration faced accusations of leading an unjust invasion and its resultant quagmire.

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<sup>138</sup> According to Gray, “There is no small danger that a succession of easy victories, such as the United States has achieved over the past decade with the exception of Somalia will encourage a misleading technological triumphalism. Military establishments, being sensibly conservative and prudent when offered novelty...can hardly help but seek and apply the lessons learned in recent conflicts.” Gray, *Defining and Achieving Decisive Victory*, 31. After United States forces quickly deposed of the Iraqi regime, Lai further challenged the conventional wisdom that technology had revolutionized warfare, suggesting how “one can see that the fundamentals of the Western way of war remain unaltered. The revolution has only made it more powerful.” David Lai, *Learning from the Stones: A GO Approach to Mastering China’s Strategic Concept*, SHI (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2004), 6.

Nearly a year after the tragedy at Haditha, Bush finally overcame the stranglehold of his strong defense secretary and allowed a change in strategy.<sup>139</sup> In Gates, Petraeus, and eventually Mullen, the president formed a team united by their belief in the importance of winning over the population. Instead of using overwhelming force to crush an opposing enemy, the new strategy embraced the necessity to gain a political victory by co-opting them. The transition meant the president's goal of using military force to convert abusive totalitarian regimes into democracies for the purpose of achieving world peace was incompatible with the reality of the conflict.<sup>140</sup> The nature of war and the limitations of means finally altered the ends of policy during the 2007 surge. Gates' 2008 NDS captured the lesson.<sup>141</sup>

In 2009, the Obama administration made an overt decision to maintain the momentum achieved in Iraq by refocusing the efforts of the military in Afghanistan under the leadership of the previous administration's secretary of defense. Instead of using force in an attempt to turn Afghanistan into a Middle Eastern version of America, the current strategy there restrains the potential for civilian casualties. Ultimately, McChrystal hopes to convince the population of the legitimacy of its pro-Western central government supported by a NATO effort more attractive than the methods of the Taliban. Although the final chapter on the strategic implications of America's efforts in the Middle East has not been written, Sun Tzu's foreboding warning about the cost of protracted wars calls into question the desirability of the choice for a long war.

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<sup>139</sup> As evidence of Bush's rigid exclusion of changes to the strategy, the president only published two versions of his NSS during his eight-year term. In contrast, the Clinton administration published a new one each year. Similarly, the chairman only published one NMS during the Bush administration.

<sup>140</sup> Fukuyama accuses Bush's policy of leading the United States into the governance of hostile nations. Francis Fukuyama, *State-building: Governance and World Order in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 94-95. O'Sullivan discusses how this use of force paradoxically raised questions about America's military strength. O'Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 189. DeYoung highlights how the understanding of this concept limited the objectives of the elder Bush's administration during the 1991 conflict in Iraq. Relying on the leadership of Colin Powell, they believed leaving Saddam in place was the best alternative based on the idea that a stated goal of regime change would destroy America's credibility in the region, negatively effect America's relationship with its allies, and plunge the Middle East into greater instability. They further believed leaving the country would be impossible if they toppled the regime. A decade later, the junior Bush's administration proved his father's cabinet had been right. DeYoung, *Soldier*, 211-12.

<sup>141</sup> O'Sullivan suggests, "the realities of Iraq did not match the administration's blueprint for military transformation." O'Sullivan, *Colin Powell*, 180.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Analysis and Conclusions**

*[State-building] is a task that has become vital to international security yet is one that few developed countries have mastered. Learning to do state-building better is thus central to the future of world order.*

-Francis Fukuyama  
*State-building*

*The maiming and killing of men and the destruction of human shelters and other installations, however necessary it may be for other reasons, cannot in itself make a positive contribution to any democratic purpose. The destructive process of war must always be accompanied by, or made subsidiary to, a different sort of undertaking aimed at widening the horizons and changing the motives of men and should never be thought of in itself as a proper vehicle for hopes and enthusiasms and dreams of world improvement.*

-George Kennan  
*American Diplomacy*

After nearly a decade of setbacks, frustration, and questionable gains in the Middle East, the United States government continues to seek an effective approach to nation building led by its military. In Iraq, the tenuous gains achieved by a change in strategy in 2007 have allowed the drawdown of American forces to the lowest levels since the invasion in 2003. The Obama administration hopes for similar progress in Afghanistan following its decision to surge forces under McChrystal's population-centric strategy. After downgrading these ongoing campaigns from efforts in the Global War on Terror to Overseas Contingency Operations, the administration's continued commitment to their conduct reveals the executive's approval of the military's use for the purposes of nation building. Notwithstanding the ideological merits of building the capacity for effective governance in other nations, the historical record offers few examples of success.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> After suggesting weak or failing states are the “single most important problem for international order” and that “the art of state-building will be a key component of national power, as important as the ability to deploy traditional military force to the maintenance of world order,” Fukuyama describes how numerous nation-building efforts have actually eroded the recipient state’s institutional capacity for effective

The poor track record calls into question the heavy emphasis on solving the ends of nation building with the means of military force.<sup>2</sup> Discussing America's recent efforts James Dobbins concludes, "a review of American experience over the 20 years since the end of the Cold War suggests that in all such cases the civilian component was slow to arrive, and seldom sufficient in size or capability."<sup>3</sup> Based on his prediction of a continued lack of civilian capacity, Lugar suggests, "the United States may come to depend even more on the military for tasks and functions far beyond its current role."<sup>4</sup> The assertions of Dobbins and Lugar betray American policy makers' lack of interest in increasing American nation-building capacity. The attachment of military means to nation-building ends is a domestic policy marriage of convenience caused by policy makers unprepared for life after the Soviet Union and the distortive effects of an abnormally large military.

Armed with a rudimentary understanding of the Constitution, an inquisitor need dig no further than America's post-Cold War civil-military relations and corresponding applications of force to discover a trend toward a system of government many of the document's Framers fought to overcome. Based on the time capsules examined in the previous three chapters, the domestic political labels of hawk and dove, and their association with a particular political party, play little more than a minor role in determining the probability of force application. Reductionist conventional wisdom suggesting America's political parties significantly differ regarding their perspective on the use of force offers little explanatory power in the presence of recent history. The nexus of multiple inputs has shifted America's civil-military relations away from Cohen's unequal dialogue. The relationship today more closely resembles an executive

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governance. Francis Fukuyama, *State-building: Governance and World Order in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 92, 100, 120-21.

<sup>2</sup> According to Dolman, "there are political ramifications of using military power even for non-military purposes, such as the distribution of humanitarian aid. The fact that military forces are employed carries a latent capacity for violence with it. This will affect the political aim." Everett Carl Dolman, *Pure Strategy* (New York, NY: Frank Cass, 2005), 33.

<sup>3</sup> James Dobbins, "Organizing for Victory," *Prism* 1, no.1 (December 2009): 62. Richard Lugar also concludes, "we still have a long way to go on the civilian side of stability and reconstruction efforts." Richard G. Lugar, "Stabilization and Reconstruction: A Long Beginning," *Prism* 1, no.1 (December 2009): 8.

<sup>4</sup> Lugar, "Stabilization and Reconstruction," 8.

monologue supported by military action. Implications of the trend threaten the principles underlying America's identity as the land of the free and the home of the brave.<sup>5</sup>

### **Balance of Power: Elucidating the Trend**

George Kennan claimed America is “a nation which has no traditional concepts of military strategy or of the place of military power in the structure of our national life.”<sup>6</sup> Conveyed in the waning years of the Cold War, Kennan’s observation reflected America’s ongoing adjustment to the large standing military necessitated by the imminent threat of a nuclear exchange. Influenced by the realities of the Cold War, Kenneth Waltz developed his *Theory of International Politics* to explain the role of states as the primary power brokers in an anarchic system. In the system described by Waltz, states cooperate with one another as they attempt to form a balance of power in which no single state dominates the others.<sup>7</sup> After the tenuous balance created by the competing superpowers and their alliances during the Cold War, the dissolution of its communist antagonist swiftly thrust the United States into a new position of global hegemony. Wholly unprepared for its new role, America continues to struggle with the appropriate place for military power in a society founded on the principle of limited government.

Demonstrating an inability to use the past as a guide to the present and future, the 2002 NSS describes the Bush administration’s desire to “create a balance of power that favors freedom.”<sup>8</sup> This simple statement, used in the document to describe Bush’s intention to lead the world in the common cause of ending terrorism, highlights one input into the trend toward continued expansion of the military’s role in foreign policy. The choice of terms underscores a fundamental misunderstanding of the great power’s role in the international political system. Instead of creating a balance of power by waging war

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<sup>5</sup> In addition to Bacevich’s comments cited in earlier chapters, Cohen also recognizes and discusses the disproportionate size and influence of the military in the United States government. Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime* (New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 2002), 242.

<sup>6</sup> George F. Kennan, *American Diplomacy: Expanded Edition* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 175.

<sup>7</sup> Waltz theorizes that the international political system will produce “a strong tendency toward balance in the system” because “states will engage in balancing behavior, whether or not balanced power is the end of their acts.” Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 128.

<sup>8</sup> The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Office of the President, September 2002).

as suggested by the Bush administration, Kenneth Waltz suggests great powers normally seek to maintain the status quo by relying on the threat of latent force to prevent conflicts.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, since the evaporation of the threat presented by the Soviet Union, American presidents have continued their search for increasingly diverse military capabilities in a quest to apply force as a solution to foreign policy problems.

### The Executive's Input

When the elder Bush discussed the change of Biblical proportions created by the dissolution of the Soviet Union, he unwittingly revealed the temptation of American presidents to apply force in an attempt to right the wrongs of foreign policy. The first to govern for a complete term after the Cold War, the Clinton administration struggled to overcome the political resistance to force application inherent in American society by psychologically separating the use of force from sacrifice.<sup>10</sup> After the bitter experience of Somalia, the administration refused to put American ground forces in harm's way and restrained airmen from taking actions of increased risk during combat operations. Yet the administration continually sought a more flexible military apparatus capable of addressing a greater array of foreign policy problems than the combat operations for which they were created and trained.<sup>11</sup> The younger Bush administration continued the

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<sup>9</sup> Espousing his theory of international relations rooted in realism, Waltz asserts, “force is cheap, especially for a status-quo power, if its very existence works against its use.” His implication is that status-quo powers exercise force best when they realize force’s potential to prevent a destabilizing war rather than using it to engage in wars, whose outcomes always remain unpredictable. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 186.

<sup>10</sup> Robert E. Lee warned against the human tendency to resort to force when he noted, “it is well that war is so terrible, or we should grow too fond of it.” Quoted in Christopher O’Sullivan, *Colin Powell: American Power and Intervention from Vietnam to Iraq* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009), 92. Representative of her administration’s use of force, Madeleine Albright demonstrated her willingness to use force as long as it did not result in the sacrifices required by war when she stated, “the cause of peace and justice might from time to time compel the United States to use force; but peace-loving Americans did not make war on others.” Quoted in Andrew J. Bacevich, *American Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 48.

<sup>11</sup> In the United States, officers take an oath upon their initial commissioning into military service. In this oath, they swear allegiance to the Constitution and promise to defend it against foreign and domestic enemies. By definition, this oath requires the precondition of an attack on the Constitution to justify the military action of defense. As successive post-Cold War administrations have expanded the role of the military, they have stretched the intent of this oath in two ways. First, they have justified the use of force by insinuating that America’s Constitutional principles of freedom and liberty apply to people who are not citizens of the United States. This claim lies at the root of the decision for military intervention in the Balkans and in the Middle East. Second, recent administrations have stretched the intent of the oath by using military force as a means to maintain their own domestic popularity. Perhaps more egregious, this

trend, yet quickly overcame the American aversion to casualties based on the public's outrage over the 9/11 attacks. Nevertheless, the limitations of force application were revealed to the world when the traditional military roles of killing and capturing could not achieve the peaceful conclusion Bush sought in the Middle East. Willing to sacrifice conventional latent force to better conduct nation-building operations with a whole-of-government focus emphasizing policing, the administration oversaw the transition to the 2007 surge strategy. The Obama administration shows no signs of reversing the trend.

Successive administrations have also found detours around roadblocks to the increasing application of force in a variety of missions. The Weinberger-Powell Doctrine's prescription to limit the military's use to only those instances where America's vital interests are at stake represents one such obstacle. Despite the doctrine's attempt to limit force application, presidents continue to interpret the restriction in a manner that serves their policy objectives.<sup>12</sup> Beyond subjective interpretation of the word vital, the Clinton administration introduced the notions of coercive diplomacy and OOTW to suggest interests not meeting the higher threshold of vital could also require the use of force.<sup>13</sup> Whether propagating the ill-defined concept of vital national interests or disregarding the threshold from the outset, policy makers refuse to submit to the authority of a use-of-force doctrine designed to restrain them from applying force in ill-suited conditions.

At the heart of the executive's input into the trend of increasing force application lies the perceived conflation of American interests with those of other states. A recurring theme present in every NSS since the Cold War claims the rest of the world desires to

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attempt to align the interests of the military with the interests of the executive wrecks of more extreme historical examples such as Nazi Germany, wherein members of the military swore allegiance to Adolf Hitler himself.

<sup>12</sup> DiPrizio suggests, "interpretation plays a large role in determining if and when soft security concerns are present and when they are important enough to trigger [military] action. This is true, of course, for even so-called vital national interests because...there is no universal definition of the term." Robert C. DiPrizio, *Armed Humanitarians: US Interventions from Northern Iraq to Kosovo* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 162. Barack Obama's recent statement reflects the latest in the ongoing trend of presidents claiming vital national interests are at stake in order to justify their use of force: "If I thought for a minute that America's vital interests were not served, were not at stake here in Afghanistan, I would order all of you home right away." CNN Wire Staff, "Obama Returns to U.S. After Surprise Visit to Afghanistan," *Cable News Network*, 29 March 2010, <http://www.cnn.com/2010/POLITICS/03/29/obama.trip.return/index.html> (accessed 6 May 2010).

<sup>13</sup> Although DiPrizio concedes some degree of consensus that armed intervention is justified for state survival and the protection of land, population, and economic resources, he claims lower tiered interests are more controversial and leave room for subjective interpretation. DiPrizio, *Armed Humanitarians*, 162.

pursue the same ideals as those espoused by the United States.<sup>14</sup> Deeply rooted in American exceptionalism, the notion of aligned interests juxtaposes cause and effect.<sup>15</sup> Other states in the international system cannot fail to give United States foreign policy wide berth without suffering the consequences of falling out of favor with the global hegemon. Yet recent American presidents interpret the effect of United States power as a sign that other nations seek the same ideals. After observing the Clinton administration's use of force as a form of diplomacy in the 1990s, the Bush administration viewed 9/11 as a mandate for expanding America's influence through force application.<sup>16</sup>

### The Environment's Input

Beyond executive influence, the interaction of two changes in the international environmental also increases the likelihood of the executive's resort to force. The first of these changes is the proliferation of increasingly lethal technology. Powell's speech at the United Nations in 2003 convinced the American public of the imminent and substantial threat presented by the Ba'athist regime acquiring weapons of mass destruction. After decades of dedication to deterring a nuclear-armed superpower, the most pressing nuclear threat now emanates from rogue nations and non-state actors. In addition to nuclear weapons, the proliferation of chemical, biological, radiological, and cyber weapons provides justification for a military with the capability to prevent and respond to organizations that attempt to use them. Interestingly, some maintain the perspective that the United States has caused an increasing diversification of threats based on the desire of other international actors to balance American power.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Of course, the same reductionist logic excludes from the world community those actors whose policies do not support the position of the United States. Instead of acknowledging the right of others to determine their own fate in a self-help system, American foreign policy labels these entities obstructionist at best and enemies at worst.

<sup>15</sup> Fukuyama, *State-building*, 113.

<sup>16</sup> According to Fukuyama, United States post-Cold War nation-building tendency is rooted in the 1990s. Fukuyama, *State-building*, 96-97.

<sup>17</sup> According to one air force officer, "US dominance has created a strategic environment that, although generally more stable, is vastly more diverse in its security threats. For that reason, it defies the development of a single use-of-force doctrine that is universal in its relevance and, at the same time, equally useful and specific in every situation. Thus, the post-Cold War environment makes the development of a universal or 'silver bullet' use-of-force doctrine more challenging than at any other time in history." Lt Col Arnel B. Enriquez, "The US National Security Strategy of 2002: A New Use-of-Force Doctrine?," *Air & Space Power Journal*, 1 September 04.

Regardless of cause or effect, American conventional wisdom accepts the logic that the proliferation of increasingly lethal weapons necessitates a powerful military.

The second environmental change is the increased diversity of actors in the international community. Since World War II, the number of sovereign states continues to increase as great powers relinquish control of former territories (see Figure 1). This



**Figure 1: Increase in Number of Independent States**

Source: *CountryWatch, Inc.*<sup>18</sup>

environmental change is significant for two reasons. First, removing the authority of the former great power can result in regional instability due to chaos or civil war if the newly independent state lacks the capacity for effective governance. Second, newly independent states present an opportunity for hostile regimes and non-state actors to consolidate gains in areas no longer under the influence of a great power. Since America has established the precedent of responding to both problems with the military, these

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<sup>18</sup> CountryWatch Global Thematic Maps, "Global Independence Dates," [http://www.countrywatch.com/facts/facts\\_default.aspx?type=image&img=GID](http://www.countrywatch.com/facts/facts_default.aspx?type=image&img=GID) (accessed 5 May 2010).

environmental changes provide another input into the trend of increased applications of force.<sup>19</sup>

## The Military's Input

Since the professionalization of the American officer corps after the Civil War, the military has claimed a unique and distinctive expertise regarding the use of force.<sup>20</sup> After the debacle in Vietnam, the rallying cry of the Weinberger doctrine found widespread support among an officer corps yearning to assert its influence on policy maker decisions regarding when and how to use the military. With its emphasis on vital national interests, the use of force as an *ultima ratio*, and a requirement for overwhelming force to secure victory quickly, the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine sets a high threshold for a situation to qualify for military intervention. Certainly Powell attempted to codify these and other central tenets into national strategy when he published the first NMS. Perhaps the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine is responsible for the conventional wisdom that military leaders inhibit policy makers from using force. Yet Robert DiPrizio debunks this myth in his analysis of post-Cold War conflicts.<sup>21</sup> Given numerous military operations since the

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<sup>19</sup> Despite the temptation to interfere in the affairs of other nations, Kennan suggests, “it is important...for us to recognize that our institutions may not have relevance for people living in other climes and conditions and that there can be social structures and forms of government in no way resembling our own and yet not deserving of censure.” He further asserts, America should “let them work out their internal problems in their own manner. The ways by which peoples advance toward dignity and enlightenment in government are things that constitute the deepest and most intimate processes of national life.” Kennan, *American Diplomacy*, 135-36. Fukuyama’s analysis supports Kennan’s perspective. He concludes, “Most nation-builders soon find that their ability to shape the local society is very limited.” Fukuyama, *State-building*, 37. Despite Kennan’s and Fukuyama’s agreement, recent administrations have used arguments ranging from morality and human values to the threat of terrorism to justify using the military to intervene in the internal affairs of other states.

<sup>20</sup> Roman and Tarr assert, “military officers are schooled in a tradition that asserts as well as embraces the idea that the professional military officer is an expert in the management of violence for which there is no civilian peer. This is, in fact, a widely shared conception.” Peter J. Roman and David W. Tarr, “Military Professionalism and Policymaking,” in *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security*, ed. Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 405. Although he had significant experience with defense policy and programming as a former secretary of defense, Rumsfeld led a civilian effort to change the military’s posture from deterrence to offensive action despite his lack of war-fighting experience. Regarding the Bush administration, Mann also observes, “there was no one among them whose career had been devoted primarily to diplomacy or to building international institutions.” James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush’s War Cabinet* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2004), 274, 315.

<sup>21</sup> According to DiPrizio, although military opposition to humanitarian intervention is commonly identified as inhibiting action, the military (after opposing action) carried out their presidential orders once decided by the president in Iraq, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Rwanda. “In none of the cases was military opposition the deciding factor in delaying or abdicating action.” DiPrizio, *Armed Humanitarians*, 161. If he had

Cold War, the minimal number of senior military leaders retiring in protest provides policy makers tacit approval of their use of force. Nevertheless, knowing when to draw the line between retiring to send a message and failing as a commander remains an elusive distinction for many.<sup>22</sup> Bacevich goes one step further when he suggests that military leaders oversell their capabilities to presidents inexperienced in military matters.<sup>23</sup> Since the fall of the Soviet Union, military leaders unwilling or unable to articulate an effective argument against using military force have increasingly attempted to fulfill every demand made by policy makers who lack experience in military matters.<sup>24</sup>

The military's development of enhanced capabilities also increases the likelihood of excessive use of force. Undoubtedly, recent advancements in technology are rooted in the commander in chief's continuing demands for increasing capability and flexibility present in every NSS. The military's reward for meeting these demands is the realization that increasing capabilities often lead to a corresponding increase in the likelihood of their use.<sup>25</sup> Examples of recent force enhancements abound.<sup>26</sup> Many stem from large

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written after 2003, DiPrizio could have added Afghanistan and America's second invasion of Iraq to his examples of times when military opinion held little sway over policy maker decisions about when and how to use force.

<sup>22</sup> O'Hanlon suggests "The country's Constitution makes the president commander in chief and requires military leaders to follow his orders. It does not, however, require them to remain mute when poor plans are being prepared. Nor does it require them to remain in uniform when they are asked to undertake actions they know to be unwise or ill-planned." Michael E. O'Hanlon, "Iraq Without a Plan: Next Time Listen to the Generals," *Policy Review*, no. 128 (December 2004 & January 2005) <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policyreview/3432146.html> (accessed 19 February 2010). George Washington agreed with O'Hanlon's conclusion when he stated, "generals in free society's need not be "yes" men; nonetheless, if their thinking is rejected, they must carry out disagreeable orders and policies or else resign their commissions." Don Higginbotham, *George Washington and the American Military Tradition* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 88. Upon his replacement as the younger Bush's chief of staff in March 2006, Andrew Card blamed the generals for not refusing to invade Iraq. Bob Woodward, *State of Denial: Bush at War, Part III* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 455.

<sup>23</sup> Similar to the Joint Chief's inability to follow through in the Iran hostage rescue attempt and the Bay of Pigs, Bacevich blames the tragedy in Somalia on the military's influence over a president unfamiliar with using force. Bacevich suggests this military pride, unwilling to take responsibility for failure or put soldiers at risk, forced Bill Clinton to devise a new doctrine for military employment. Bacevich, *American Empire*, 147.

<sup>24</sup> Contrary to his recommendation of an unequal dialogue, Cohen notes how recent "military 'advice' has...been...a preparation of options, and sometimes a single option, for the civilian leadership." Cohen, *Supreme Command*, 200.

<sup>25</sup> Certainly the relationship between technological developments and increasing uses of force lies at the root of international concerns that the United States will be more likely to use force given the reduction in risk associated with the use of remotely controlled combat vehicles.

<sup>26</sup> Remotely controlled weapon systems, stealth technology, precision weapons, night vision equipment, the enhanced capacity for command, control, communication, and intelligence made possible by American

defense contracts that diversify the new systems' supply chains to gain the support of multiple Congressmen interested in translating federal funds into dollars in their respective districts.<sup>27</sup> After spending the Cold War using improved technology to deter conflict, new systems in the post-Cold War era barely roll off the production line before they are used in ongoing combat operations.

### **Summarizing the Trend**

The nexus of inputs from the executive, the environment, and the military itself fuels the trend toward a military institution incapable of resisting the increasing tendency of presidents to resort to force application. The Constitutionally ill-defined role of the commander in chief allows presidents significant latitude in determining their relationship with the military. Since the Cold War, successive administrations have increasingly leveraged their control over the military to expand the application of force into more diverse roles. A changing environment provides the necessary justification as the increasing potential for regional instability caused by the rapid increase of independent states combines with the proliferation of increasingly lethal weapons to produce a panoply of foreign policy and security challenges. Finally, the military's rapidly increasing capabilities, political interests, and organizational culture form a willing and adaptable tool for policy makers to wield. If Waltz's theory reflects reality, other states will engage in balancing behavior as they attempt to resist the self-reinforcing trend toward increasing use of force created by a combination of inputs from the executive, the military, and the environment.

### **Implications for American Civil-Military Relations**

The current state of America's civil-military relations resulted from the rapid transition away from Cold War views regarding the use of force. Although their theories offer different perspectives on America's civil-military relations, Cohen and Huntington agree about the importance of a discourse between policy makers and their senior

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space and cyber power, and the organization of the joint force into adaptable force packages suitable for rapid response and deployment all offer new options to policy makers in the post-Cold War era.

<sup>27</sup> The F-22's manufacturing or parts supplied by 44 different states is suggestive. Adam Levine, "Senate Rejects Additional F-22 funding," *Cable News Network*, 21 July 2009, <http://www.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/07/21/senate.f22/index.html> (accessed 6 May 2010).

military leaders. Whether this discourse evolves from Huntington's emphasis on the system's structure or Cohen's description of an effective commander in chief, the military and civilian interpretations of the problem must each bring their unique perspective to the dialogue. Clausewitz's distilled trinity of war further highlights the importance of the population in defining the state's concept of war.<sup>28</sup> In Clausewitz's terms, America's post-Cold War history reveals a system out of balance. Clinton's attempts at war from a distance and Bush's suggestion that Americans return to normal life while he begins the Global War on Terror demonstrate the executive's attempt to use force without stirring the passions of the American public.<sup>29</sup> Whether marginalizing military input or avoiding the involvement of American citizens, the executive's power over the military continues to grow. Clausewitz's description of three magnets pulling on each other appears more like a marionette with the population and the military subject to the whims of a puppeteer.<sup>30</sup>

Yet a civil-military relationship wherein senior military leaders conditioned to respond to the whims of policy makers cannot influence policy formulation prevents the development of effective national strategy. Bacevich suggests political leaders are fixated on remaking the world in America's image and the military is fixated on the operational level of war while no one is developing the nation's grand strategy.<sup>31</sup> While policies provide guidance and operations direct tactical tasks, strategy links the means and ways of the latter with the ends of the former. Absent this critical function, policy

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<sup>28</sup> Although Clausewitz's paradoxical trinity of war consists of the interplay between the "blind natural force" of human passion, "the play of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam," and the "element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone," he attributed each of these aspects to a portion of the state. He tied passion to the people of the state, chance and probability to the military and its senior commander, and reason to the government. Clausewitz describes his intention to develop his theory of war based on maintaining "a balance between these three tendencies, like an object suspended between three magnets." Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 89.

<sup>29</sup> "Like mowing lawns and bussing tables, fighting and perhaps dying to sustain the American way of life became something that Americans pay others to do." Andrew J. Bacevich, *The Limits of Power* (New York, NY: Metropolitan Books, 2008), 138. Congressional unwillingness to stop funding the American war effort provides further evidence that presidents maintain a high degree of unchecked power over the decision to start and continue applying force.

<sup>30</sup> Cimbala underscores the importance of the president mobilizing domestic support for war. "Otherwise the people, army, and government are moving in separate paths, with unfortunate results for policy and for strategy." Stephen J. Cimbala, "Conclusions," *Clinton and Post-Cold War Defense* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), 177.

<sup>31</sup> Bacevich, *The Limits of Power*, 167.

becomes an unforgiving and rigid tyrant while operations are often conducted in a manner inconsistent with the policies they serve. In the American system, the chairman's role in developing strategy cannot be overemphasized.

Post-Cold War America presents numerous cases illuminating the critical role of the chairman in determining strategy. In Desert Storm, Powell played a significant role in shaping national strategy before and during the war.<sup>32</sup> Cheney's exasperation with Powell's constant questioning of Bush's intentions highlights the chairman's influence on the decision to start the conflict. Powell's position as an actor and translator between the policy makers in Washington DC and Schwarzkopf's operations ensured strategic considerations continued to receive adequate attention during the conflict. Unfortunately, the lack of involvement of the policy and strategy level in the aftermath meant Schwarzkopf's negotiations with the Iraqis failed to account for the strategic requirements necessary to ensure the failure of the Ba'athist regime. Pundits often confuse the concept of strategy based on reductionist descriptions that fail to account for multiple levels of war. Although strategic decision-making takes place at every level, considerations of national strategy must go beyond the immediate concerns of the campaign to account for the broadest perspective of national activities. As described by one service chief, "a CINC's got one job and one job only: win his war. And if you think he's going to take into account the national or international picture, you're crazy."<sup>33</sup> In Desert Storm, the president worked with his secretary of defense to determine policy, the chairman shaped the strategy, and Schwarzkopf conducted operations.

Under the Clinton administration, policy and operations gained momentum while strategy was marginalized. Instead of facing and accounting for the independent strategic thought offered by Powell, the administration co-opted the military's role in national strategy by selecting a chairman sympathetic to its policies and holding the entire military establishment hostage by threatening cuts in force structure and unwelcome changes in

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<sup>32</sup> In line with Huntington's normal theory of civil-military relations, Powell believed his job was to match political objectives to military objectives and means based on what was achievable. Powell also maintained significant access to the political leadership's inner circle. David Roth, *Sacred Honor, Colin Powell: The Inside Account of His Life and Triumphs* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), 196, 199.

<sup>33</sup> Roman and Tarr, "Military Professionalism and Policymaking," 416. Although no longer used to define a military position, the acronym CINC (Commander in Charge) refers to a previous title referring to combatant commanders directly responsible for all military operations in the conduct of a campaign.

policy. Following the awesome demonstration of America's military strength in Desert Storm, the administration saw little reason to make the difficult choices normally required by the demands of strategy. After Shalikashvili began the process of transforming the military from its emphasis on conventional strength and deterrence to a focus on OOTW and peacekeeping, Shelton allowed it to continue. In Kosovo, Clark's zealous efforts at the operational level continually circumvented the chairman in an attempt to work directly with policy makers in the United States and NATO. Unsurprisingly, his myopic focus on his own theater and his disproportionate influence over the chairman in Washington DC facilitated the development of a notion that the conflict would last no more than three days. Shelton's role in Kosovo looked nothing like Powell's in 1991.

Under the Bush administration, national strategy took another leap backward. Beyond a lack of involvement in determining strategy in Afghanistan and Iraq, Myers and Pace became as irrelevant to defense policy as Rumsfeld claimed they were. Given extensive authority over policy under Bush, the secretary of defense worked directly with the operational level during the planning, conduct, and aftermath of conventional operations in Iraq. Although Bush eventually removed Rumsfeld at the end of 2006, he proceeded to work directly with operational leaders to implement the surge strategy. The same remains true during current operations in Afghanistan where responsibility for the war largely resides in the relationship between Gates and McChrystal. Although Mullen claims to agree with McChrystal's approach, he appears no more able than his recent predecessors to influence national strategy under the strong leadership of Gates. While Afghanistan operations largely follow the template of the 2007 surge based on conventional wisdom suggesting it was a success, its achievements reside primarily at the operational level. The larger implications of its effect on national strategy remain unresolved. Instead of the unequal dialogue envisioned by Cohen, the military's influence on national security has been relegated to little more than that of an arm of the executive branch.

Whether considering the younger Bush's determination that the potential for a rogue nation to acquire weapons of mass destruction necessitated preventive war or the follow-on notion that the military should attempt to build nations, recent chairmen appear

powerless to inform national strategy. Fukuyama questions whether a rival country's potential to employ weapons of mass destruction justifies preventive war. His critique of Bush's decision to invade Iraq in 2003 reveals the unwillingness of the United States to tolerate strategic risk in order to adhere to its foundational principles of limited government intervention, small standing armies, and distaste for warfare.<sup>34</sup> Regarding the command to build nations, Kennan states, "where your objectives are moral and ideological ones and run to changing the attitudes and traditions of an entire people or the personality of a regime, then victory is probably something not to be achieved entirely by military means or indeed in any short space of time at all; and perhaps that is the source of our confusion."<sup>35</sup> Fukuyama and Kennan highlight two issues a chairman with a voice in determining national strategy may have raised before the decision was made to invade Iraq.

Although Kennan's discussion of victory alluded to America's efforts in the Cold War, Bush's fascination with achieving victory in the Middle East betrays his lack of appreciation for matters of national strategy. Bush equated operational victory in Iraq and Afghanistan to strategic victory in the Global War on Terror. Yet a lack of critical examination prevented the full exploration of this concept and its implications. Proposing that America's leaders should distance themselves from the quest for total victory, Kennan suggests doing so "will mean that we will have the modesty to admit that our own national interest is all that we are really capable of knowing and understanding—and the courage to recognize that if our own purposes and undertakings here at home are decent ones, unsullied by arrogance or hostility toward other people or delusions of superiority, then the pursuit of our national interest can never fail to be conducive to a better world."<sup>36</sup> Little evidence exists that America's efforts in the Middle East have resulted in any strategic advantage for the United States.

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<sup>34</sup> Fukuyama, *State-building*, 117-18.

<sup>35</sup> Kennan, *American Diplomacy*, 102.

<sup>36</sup> Kennan, *American Diplomacy*, 103. Everett Dolman also condemns the notion of victory in strategy. He states, "victory is a concept that has no meaning there; it belongs wholly within the realm of tactics." He defines strategy as "a plan for attaining continuing advantage." Dolman, *Pure Strategy*, 5-6.

## Stopping the Trend

Regardless of the outcome in the Middle East, America's NSS has increasingly included the notion of the world's interests aligning with those of the United States. Based on America's role as the default leader in the community of nations, successive presidents have considered American interests increasingly akin to global interests. Combined with a strong sense of American exceptionalism, belief in the notion of globalized interests implies the American way of life is somehow different and better than any other alternative. The foundation of this way of life lies in the United States Constitution that provides the framework for limited government of free people. Yet in an increasingly interconnected world with the United States as the reigning hegemon, global citizens are thought of as American citizens. Recent literature postulating the evolution of a globalized society claims helping states such as Afghanistan and Iraq gain the ability to engage in the global economy will help globalization triumph over humanity's history of conflict.<sup>37</sup> On the contrary, Fukuyama concludes "the withering away of the state is not a prelude to utopia but to disaster."<sup>38</sup> Since states are still the power brokers of the international system, their demise cannot help but create a power vacuum likely to breed conflict.

According to the 2002 NSS, America will use military force to export its ideals. As secretary of defense, William Cohen stated, "in a global age, our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines, all our services, must be trained to do everything."<sup>39</sup> Cohen's statement reflects the growing desire to achieve the nearly omnipotent capacity of what the military today calls full spectrum dominance.<sup>40</sup> Yet attacking other sovereign nations to promote peace and support of American ideals lacks credibility because other states feel threatened by American actions.<sup>41</sup> Whether the United States paints itself as an

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<sup>37</sup> Barnett advocates for a new rule set for national strategy based on the desire to create a globalized economy. He states, "our strategic vision for national security needs to focus on growing the community of states that recognize a stable set of rules regarding war and peace." Thomas P. M. Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-first Century* (New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2004), 25.

<sup>38</sup> Fukuyama, *State-building*, 120.

<sup>39</sup> Bacevich, *American Empire*, 131.

<sup>40</sup> Bacevich, *American Empire*, 133.

<sup>41</sup> Dolman, *Pure Strategy*, 33. Jeffrey Record further concludes that America's political system and approach to war impede its ability to successfully conduct counterinsurgency warfare and that the United States should therefore "avoid direct military involvement in foreign internal wars." Jeffrey Record, *Beating Goliath: Why Insurgencies Win* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, Inc., 2007), 137.

occupier or not, the fact remains that America has maintained a significant presence in Afghanistan for nearly a decade. Perhaps an increase in requests for American statehood would provide a better litmus test for a globalized society under American authority than a rigid belief in America's manifest destiny.

While America's position as lone superpower remains unchallenged, American presidents will continue to see little reason for reversing the trend toward the increasing application of force. Yet Waltz's theory suggests other nations will find a way to balance against American strength. In contrast, the elder Bush claimed the world would embrace America after the fall of its arch-rival.<sup>42</sup> Yet the president prefaced his statement with the observation that "much good can come from the prudent use of power."<sup>43</sup> The time capsules analyzed in the preceding case studies reflect a post-Cold War use of power better characterized as eager. Based on the increasing willingness of American presidents to apply force and the decreasing ability of the military to prevent it, reversing the trend may require a significant change of inputs into America's national security calculus.

### Beyond Counterinsurgency Operations

As presidents continue to insist on their desire to achieve conditions on the ground that allow the removal of forces from Afghanistan and Iraq, America's national strategy must account for larger considerations. In the Middle East, the military's use of force as a means to install a new government more amenable to American interests resulted in two separate counterinsurgency campaigns with uncertain outcomes. While predicting the future remains impossible, America lacks the political and economic will to continue indefinitely the current pace of operations.<sup>44</sup> When United States combat forces leave the fates of Afghanistan and Iraq to their respective populations, an

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<sup>42</sup> Bush proclaimed, "a world once divided into two armed camps now recognizes one sole and preeminent power, the United States of America. And they regard this with no dread. For the world trusts us with power, and the world is right. They trust us to be fair and restrained. They trust us to be on the side of decency. They trust us to do what's right." George H.W. Bush (address, joint session of Congress, Washington, DC, 28 January 1992).

<sup>43</sup> Bush (address, 28 January 1992).

<sup>44</sup> The recent economic woes of the United States, combined with the depletion of America's resources in the Middle East, spell a limited future for military operations there. Obama's 18-month leash on the Afghanistan surge reflects this reality. Record notes the low political tolerance modern democracies have for lengthy irregular wars. Record, *Beating Goliath*, 134.

assessment of the opportunity cost of America's use of force will begin in earnest. If the passage of time bears witness to the failure of the United States military to prevent the return to pre-invasion circumstances in either country, Americans will likely curb the president's enthusiasm for nation building with the military.<sup>45</sup> Beyond the outcome of ongoing operations in the Middle East, America's foreign policy must account for the actions and intent of more powerful states. The threat of a near-peer competitor such as China or Russia taking an aggressive stance against American interests could also spell the end of United States nation-building efforts in the Middle East. In a larger sense, the significant diminishment of America's relative power, whether due to a catastrophic financial meltdown or natural disaster, would have the same effect.

Certainly, none of the options presented here for stopping the momentum of the increasing use of force offer appealing alternatives. No American wants to believe the lives and resources poured into the Middle East in the last decade yielded nothing more than a return to previous grim realities. Conflict with a stronger nation or a national catastrophe conjures even gloomier alternatives. Yet this is exactly the point. The case studies presented herein suggest the ebb and flow of status quo hegemony over the past two decades has produced a greater likelihood that presidents will resort to force in their conduct of foreign policy. Absent the reality of a major national setback, America's post-Cold War history suggests little hope for a return to the traditional peacetime norm of a small standing military dedicated to defending the Constitution.

## The Military's Role

Notwithstanding the potential for a major change in the national security environment, the military's value as an institution lies in its ability to fulfill its traditional role. Rooted in the basic tenets of military service, many officers fall back on the notion

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<sup>45</sup> The implication of pre-invasion conditions here means al Qaeda's freedom of action in Afghanistan and a hostile regime seeking or equipped with weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Regarding the potential for failure, Kennan suggests "a nation which excuses its own failures by the sacred untouchability of its own habits can excuse itself into complete disaster." Kennan, *American Diplomacy*, 73. Bacevich draws a parallel between the United States military's rebirth post-Vietnam and the *Wehrmacht*'s in Germany post-World War II. He claims the result in both cases was the military's appetite for conquest and suggests the eventual destruction of Germany was the penalty for hubris. If the American military successfully rebuilds Afghanistan and Iraq to the point where they become effective states, the experience will likely reinforce the temptation to proceed along the lines of Bacevich's analogy. Andrew J. Bacevich, *The New American Militarism: How Americans are Seduced by War* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), 43.

of duty when confronted with an undesirable task. Yet just because an action is legal, moral, and ethical does not mean it is a good choice for national strategy. The military's transition to nation building underscores the value of leadership. Senior military leaders must understand history and strategy so that they can provide leadership both up and down the chain of command. The recent emphasis on speaking truth to power reflects the notion of leading upward, yet it does not emphasize the preparation required to adequately do so.

As demonstrated by the Clinton administration and the younger Bush administration, the commander in chief not only leads the military but also appoints the chairman and the service chiefs to their respective positions. The military's role in its own senior leadership is therefore limited to preparing the choices available to the president. Notwithstanding a change to the structure of the system, the military must therefore attempt to ensure officers with the greatest potential for senior leadership possess the capabilities required to fill the current strategic void.

The military's increased emphasis on advanced studies group programs reflects a desire to produce officers with the education and training required to address difficult puzzles that lead to an efficacious national strategy.<sup>46</sup> Yet education is only one aspect of a more complex problem. As demonstrated by Powell, a significant life experience, such as the failures he witnessed firsthand in Vietnam, and prior interactions with policy makers can both enhance an officer's ability to influence national strategy. Certainly, numerous men and women who served in Iraq and Afghanistan have emerged with valuable experiences; and several programs exist for military officers who desire to gain insight into the political process governing the military.<sup>47</sup> Despite these available opportunities, the hierarchical promotion process used to select future leaders does not necessarily produce officers with the capacity to influence national strategy.

The services' ability to selectively promote their officers to a higher grade represents perhaps their most extensive influence on the future of national defense.

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<sup>46</sup> Academic Year 2009-2010 enrollment at the air force's School of Advanced Air and Space Studies and the army's School of Advanced Military Studies increased over previous years. The marines' School of Advanced Warfighting and the more recent additions of the navy's Maritime Advanced Warfighting School and the chairman's own Joint Advanced Warfighting School further support the conclusion that the military recognizes the need to prepare officers for their future role in shaping national strategy.

<sup>47</sup> Military officers currently participate in fellowships, internships, and liaison programs in the executive and legislative branches.

Stephen Rosen's theory of military innovation emphasizes the importance of the promotion process.<sup>48</sup> Many experts advocate a building block approach wherein a military officer must first become a tactical expert, then an operational expert, and finally develop the skills necessary to influence national strategy.<sup>49</sup> Yet officers must adhere to a relatively rigid timeline to have an opportunity for senior leadership.<sup>50</sup> Dictated by the services' own requirements and those levied by Congress, this timeline lends itself more to the consistency of its end product than to the discovery and exploitation of unique talent. Additionally, the military's hierarchical system encourages those motivated to pursue positions of influence to understand its requirements and gain the favor of superior officers.

Promotion boards serve as the mechanism through which senior ranking officers select more junior officers for future service. As candidates for promotion prepare their paperwork for the board, the strength of their record hinges on their performance in previous positions. Comparisons to peers, nature of the position, and rank and influence of the rating official all contribute to the strength of the record. While the promotion process encourages the selection of officers with a track record of performance, it makes no overt attempt to assess the qualities necessary to understand and champion Kennan's contention that the nation's leaders must "recognize that there are problems in this world that we will not be able to solve, depths into which it will not be useful or effective for us to plunge, dilemmas in other regions of the globe that will have to find their solutions without our involvement."<sup>51</sup> This hole in the system that will produce the next chairman and national strategist facilitates the development of senior military leaders more

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<sup>48</sup> Basing his argument largely on the effects of military bureaucracy, Rosen believes military innovation normally requires enough time for a generational change that allows junior officers with a new conception of warfare a path to senior leadership positions. Stephen Peter Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 20.

<sup>49</sup> During Congressional testimony, Williamson Murray highlighted the Skelton Panel's finding that officers with the greatest potential should be identified early so that they can develop their capabilities for influencing national strategy as they also gain competence at the lower levels of warfare. Williamson Murray, Testimony, House Armed Services Committee: Subcommittee on Professional Military Education, Washington, DC, 10 September 2009.

<sup>50</sup> "The enormous operational commitments of our military have created an enormous tension in the career progression that officers must follow. There are quite simply a plethora of hurdles that officers must follow that make it extremely difficult for officers to prepare themselves for the operational, much less the strategic and political challenges of the twenty-first century. Congress needs to find mechanisms to allow the most outstanding officers greater and more demanding educational opportunities." Murray, Testimony, 10 September 2009.

<sup>51</sup> Kennan, *American Diplomacy*, 178.

interested in the desires and influence of their superiors than an appreciation for the limits of force application.

### **Conclusions**

The need for this form of selfless leadership is perhaps greater in this era of hegemony than it has been at any other point in American history. During the fifty years of the Cold War, the threat of Soviet military power provided an effective check on America's use of force. The ever-present potential for global destruction elevated the role of diplomacy and latent force over the role of force application. When the Soviet Union dissolved, so did the threat. Although not as absolute, the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine combined with a politically powerful chairman to resist the inclination of presidents with little military experience to apply force. With the retirement of Powell and the erosion of his use of force doctrine, few obstacles remained to prevent the president from turning to the military instrument of power.

Civil-military relations at the outset of the Clinton administration and those of today represent two opposing ends of the spectrum. When Clinton entered office, his defense policy goals were often denied by a politically powerful chairman. Additionally, the negative outcome of using force in Somalia, and to a lesser extent Haiti, cast a long shadow over the administration that served as a check on the executive's freedom of action regarding defense policy. Throughout the 1990s, the administration worked to gain control over the politically powerful military. By the time Bush entered office, executive control was largely reestablished. Both Shalikashvili and Shelton took steps to align the military instrument of power with the administration's desire for increased flexibility. The extensive defense policy experience of the Bush administration further marginalized the voice of the military. Under Bush, not only was the military responsive to the desires of the administration, 9/11 and a politically powerful secretary of defense almost completely removed the voice of senior military leadership from the policy-making process.

The trend toward using the military for nation-building operations reveals a lack of appreciation for the delicate domestic balance of power responsible for the development of America's own system of government. As they worked to design a

Constitution capable of preventing any one branch of government from dominating the others, the Framers would have almost certainly rejected the notion of using military force to install a democratic government in a sovereign nation. The system they envisioned resulted from their desire for prosperity unencumbered by government interference. The order of events in America's own history established a precedent that tyranny can lead to a desire for freedom, the eventual willingness to fight for it, and—if successful—the design of a system of limited government. Notwithstanding the obvious over-simplification, the colonists' desire for limited governance, revealed by the willingness of a significant portion of the population to fight for it, was a precondition for the eventuality of the United States of America.<sup>52</sup> In one sense, an appreciation of America's own roots rejects the notion that the most dominant country in the international system can use its most overt form of national power to install limited self-government.

Structurally, the desire of America's political leaders to intervene is easy to understand. American presidents, demonstrably able to send forces into combat without the approval of Congress or the American people, arrive at their post without any requirement for understanding history or any historical precedent for observing the effects of their ideas on foreign policy. One need look no further than then-Senator Joe Biden's comments about Bill Clinton's military and foreign policy experience after he had been president for nearly two full terms to understand this dynamic in the American system of government.<sup>53</sup> Notwithstanding the merits of America's political system, the absence of a structural imperative for experience in complex matters of foreign policy underscores the importance of the commander in chief's advisors.<sup>54</sup> Regarding the use of force, the only institution in the United States that requires approximately thirty years of experience before rising to the level of presidential advisor is the military. While

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<sup>52</sup> This contention reveals itself in Fukuyama's assertion of the importance of domestic demand in building nations. Fukuyama, *State-building*, 35–36.

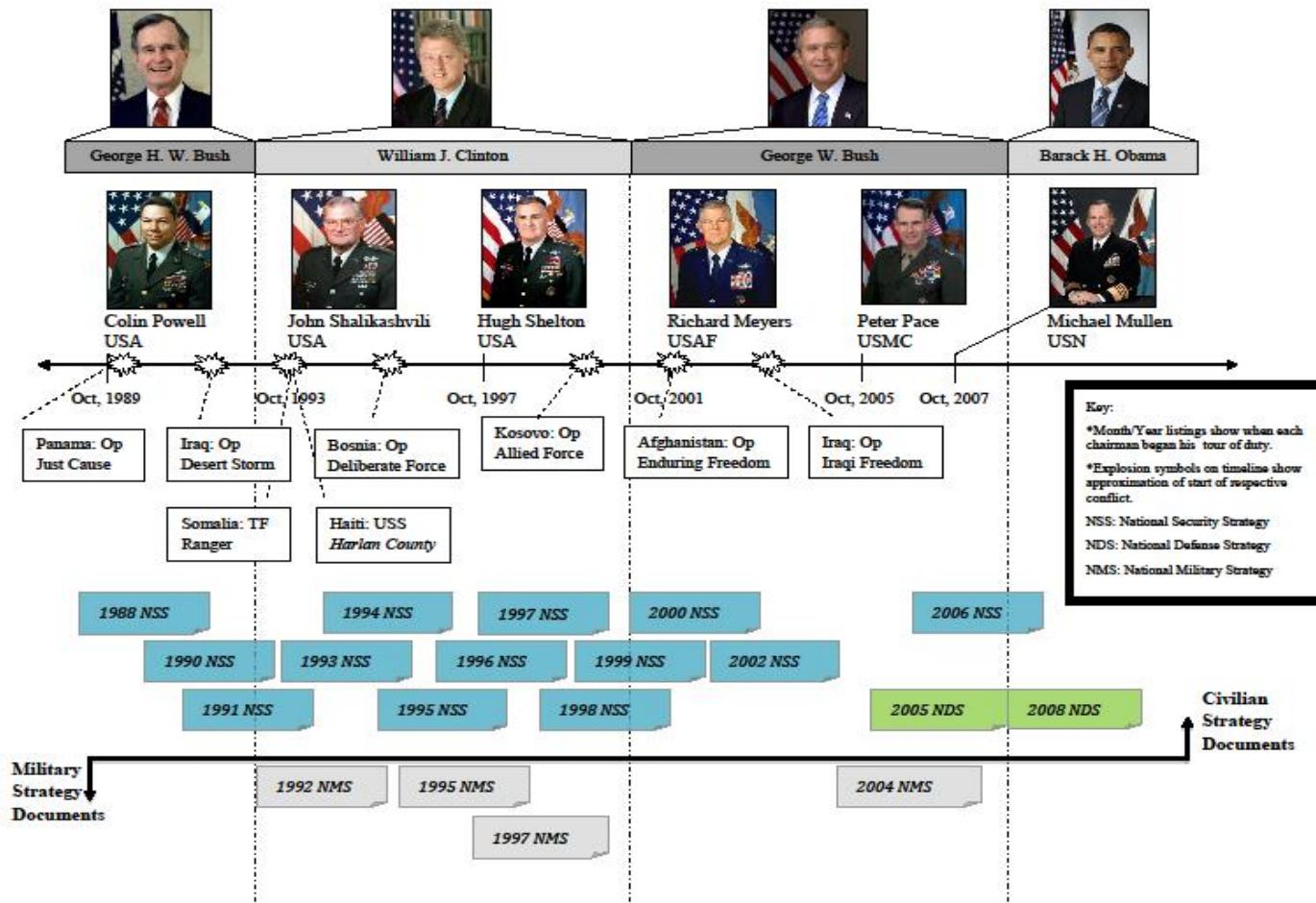
<sup>53</sup> After Milosevic gave up his fight in Kosovo, Senator Joe Biden called Clinton to congratulate him. The words he chose: "Congratulations—you've got your sea legs." Clinton's response revealed his own realization of his minimal experience in foreign policy. Beyond foreign policy, Clinton's dearth of experience in military matters prior to his presidency is also clear. David Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace* (New York, NY: Scribner, 2001), 480.

<sup>54</sup> Roman and Tarr claim, "civilian and military professionals are drawn into the policymaking arena by political appointees who need all the help they can get." Roman and Tarr, "Military Professionalism and Policymaking," 404.

Clausewitz's contention that war is the continuation of politics remains as valid today as the day he wrote it, the chairman is the president's chief advisor on military matters. In the face of complex foreign policy, activist administration members, and an inconsistent Congress, the American people rely on the chairman to elucidate the long term implications of applying force based on his understanding of history and the nature of the international political system.

America's military leaders must overcome the reality of their own role in central governance and the temptations of political power to advocate for a Department of Defense oriented toward deterrence and maintaining the status quo described by Waltz. Instead of using force to achieve a balance of power, military leaders must advocate for policies that make using force unnecessary. In the absence of a significant change in the national security environment, the willingness of humble and authoritative senior military leaders to resist the inclination of presidents to apply force in pursuit of their foreign policy goals may stem the tide of an increasingly political military. The sooner the nation's armed servants return to their role as defenders of the Constitution, and reject their misapplication as an arm of the executive branch, the more likely America's national strategy will once again reflect the founders' ideals of freedom and liberty.

## Appendix



Source: Author's Original Work

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